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MAJOR-GENERAL ISRAEL PUTNAM.

THE LIFE OF
ISRAEL PUTNAM

By GEORGE CANNING HILL

EDITED WITH NOTES
By HENRY KETCHAM



WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

"A man whose generosity was singular, whose honesty was proverbial."

A. L. BURT COMPANY, ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀
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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. Early Life.....	7
II. The French War.....	27
III. Continuation of the French War.....	50
IV. Campaign of 1758.....	67
V. End of the French War.....	93
VI. Opening of the Revolution.....	106
VII. Battle of Bunker Hill.....	133
VIII. Siege of Boston.....	158
IX. Operations in New York.....	173
X. Retreat of the American Army.....	191
XI. In the Highlands.....	212
XII. Putnam at West Point and Danbury.....	235
XIII. His Last Days.....	249
XIV. Conclusion.....	262

PREFACE.

THIS biography is written with the following purposes in mind:—To furnish from the pages of the world's history an example of true manhood, lofty purpose, and persevering effort, such as may be safely held up either for the admiration or emulation of the youth of the present day;

To clear away, in his treatment of this subject, whatever mistiness and mustiness may have accumulated with time about them, presenting to the mental vision fresh and living pictures, that shall seem to be clothed with naturalness, and energy, and vitality;

To offer no less instruction to the minds, than pleasure to the imaginations of the many for whom he has taken it in hand to write;

And, more especially, perhaps, to familiarize the youth of our day with some of those striking and manly characters, that have long ago made their mark, deep and lasting, on the history and fortunes of the AMERICAN CONTINENT.

The deeds of these men, it is true, are to be found abundantly recorded in Histories; but they lie so

scattered along their ten thousand pages, and are so intermixed with the voluminous records of other matters, as to be practically out of the reach of the *younger* portion of readers, and so of the very ones for whom this book has been especially undertaken. These want only *pictures of actual life*; and if, the author shall, in any due degree, succeed even in sketching interesting *outlines*, he will feel that he is answering the very purpose that has long lain unperformed within his heart.

INTRODUCTION.

THE purpose of this introductory chapter is to set forth briefly some of the circumstances of the ordinary life, under which the heroes of the Revolution grew up to manhood. In order to secure an accurate and vivid picture of the Revolutionary war, or of the men of that period, it is necessary to keep in mind the conditions of life that then prevailed. What is called the historical imagination is by no means common, even among the educated; and that would be a rare child who could keep before his mind the conditions of a century and a half ago, while reading a history of the French war. A mile is a mile, both in the eighteenth and in the twentieth century. At the same time good roads shorten the distance, and a trip from New York to Boston, or from Pomfret to either city, over roads good enough for bicycling, is very different from the same trip over the imperfect roads that existed in Putnam's day. On the other hand, at a time when almost every

one was accustomed to ride long distances on horse-back, that method of travel would be far easier than to the average citizen who to-day rarely sits astride a horse. The reader is always likely to forget, for the time being, such facts as these, though he knows them well; and thus the reading of the history may convey a false impression.

The farm life of the eighteenth century was certainly crude when compared with that of to-day. As for cities, there were then no cities of the sort prevailing in the twentieth century. Iron and steel were costly, and the latter was for the most part poor in quality. Steel plows were unknown for nearly a century after Putnam began to work his farm. Shovels were home-made, and the blade was usually of wood. Houses were almost entirely home-made. The owner, sometimes with and sometimes without the help of his hired men, would hew out suitable timbers for the frames and join them; then the entire neighborhood would be invited to a "raising," at which the timbers would be hoisted and firmly secured in place, and the day would close with eating and drinking, especially the latter, and with general jollity. The frame of the building was thus in position, and the owner could cover it with boards at leisure. In many a home the clothing was made from start to finish by the farmer and his wife. The sheep

were raised and sheared, and the wool was carded by the husband. Then the wife spun, and wove the wool into cloth, took the measurements, and made the clothing, to the last stitch. The charitable mind will not inquire too closely into the finish of the goods, or the style of the design, or the accuracy of the fit. It is enough to know that the work was all done in the family.

The farmer dug his own well, made his own buckets, tended and doctored his domestic animals, was amateur butcher, lived mainly from what he raised. Horses were shod, and that at considerable expense, by the blacksmith; but the wagons were largely made and kept in repair at home. The excess of farm produce was either bartered or sold outright, usually the former. Thus every family was in large measure complete in itself and independent of all the world outside. The difficulties of transportation acted as a high tariff and effectually protected and encouraged infant industries. In all this life, the demands on the wife were not less various than those on the husband. The mother was baker, cook, tallow chandler, weaver, tailor, nurse, teacher, and much else besides; and in addition to all the duties that by tradition are supposed to belong to womankind, she not infrequently lent a hand in the garden and field, and in the care of the domestic animals. The "men folks," too, ac-

quired some versatility; for, in case of illness or other disability, they could not send off and on short notice obtain trained nurse or cook, but were required to do the pressing duties for themselves, or go without.

These facts brought many advantages and many disadvantages. The home-made tools and clothing were by no means equal in quality to those which to-day may be purchased at a low cost. Nor were the products of the farm such as would now be exhibited at agricultural fairs. The pork was largely of the "razor-back" variety. Horses were not thoroughbred. The other animals and the poultry were, to say the best, of ordinary excellence. The apples, plums, pears, and grapes, were sour and hardly worth the picking. Tomatoes were then unknown. One might thus go through the entire list of the farmer's possessions and products and find that at every point they would make a sorry comparison with what we see to-day, and one wonders how they endured such disadvantages.

Let it be remembered also that the crude conditions of the farm life were no more marked than those in other departments of activity. There were no large factories to supply products of industry in fabulous quantities: no watch factories, no sewing machines, no great mills. In commerce it was the same.

Franklin, who sold his books and papers, first wrote them, then set the type, then printed them by a hand press. To go back a century and a half into that form of culture, would be like stepping into another world.

But there is another side to that sort of life, and that concerns its educational influence, its enormous value in developing men. There were few books, magazines, and newspapers; but the daily duties gave food for thought. To-day a man is supposed to be master of one trade, a machinest will spend his life at one kind of work. The work is surely well done, but the mind of the worker is not broadened. When the worker had to do everything by his own hand and brain, the work was crude but the man was developed both in intelligence and character. There was slight knowledge of literature, the "three great Rs" constituted almost a literary education; but the thrift, the self-control and reliance, the industry, and all the qualities that go to make a true and sterling manhood, were great.

Those who to-day go from the centers of culture to the frontier may see, to a certain extent, how the demands of the circumstances of the latter tend to develop a high grade of intelligence and the essentials of a manly character. The speech may be a dialect, the dress uncouth, and the manners the reverse of

winsome; but these frontiersmen frequently manifest a high degree of general intelligence. Be it remembered that every state in the Union was builded by men who were frontiersmen in their day. Not only the original thirteen are a credit to their builders, but all the rest, from the Ohio river to the Pacific ocean, are an undeniable evidence of the practical wisdom of men who, far from the centers of wealth, commerce, culture, have received that education which comes from the practical necessities of poverty upon the frontier.

The armies, or the soldiers, we see to-day are well clothed, well fed, well armed, and well disciplined. These facts are so intimately connected with our ideas of what military life is, that it is hard to imagine an army from which all these are conspicuously absent. The revolutionary soldiers had bravery, intelligence, and independence—in fact the men were often far too independent for the general good!—but in appearance they were a motley crowd. In the main “the embattled farmers” were clothed after the manner of farmers, and a battalion contained within itself all the varieties suggested by the famous coat of many colors, but with none of its beauties. Where there were uniforms, there were not enough to go around, and so that did not materially better the situation. The guns, too, were such as the men

previously owned or could get. There were companies of militia, but their annual drill on the village green did not furnish training enough to be of material value. We may assume that in that war, as in almost every other, the majority of the private soldiers were either boys or very young men. The young are peculiarly susceptible to the show of military pomp, and of such pomp the patriot army had nothing; there was nothing to appeal to this spectacular sense, which counts for so much in war.

To be more specific, we may enumerate some of the most prominent of the difficulties that met the generals and other commanders of that day. The first was found in the enforcement of discipline. The perfect soldier is and should be, up to a certain point, a machine. "Theirs not to make a reply, theirs not to reason why." The one duty is obedience. This sort of soldier is precisely what the average American was not. The whole training of the people was in the direction of individualism, and personal freedom, and the patriotic youth was always asking why. For this they or their fathers had left the mother country to make homes in the howling wilderness. This was further enforced by their theology, their civic training, and their personal habits. It was therefore impossible for the officers to issue peremptory orders according to military methods. If the orders did not

meet with the approval of the privates, they were ignored. These same privates had earnest opinions on all questions that came up, and when matters did not meet their approval they would simply leave the army and go back to the farm or shop: in technical language, they deserted. There was no method of enforcing orders, such as is possessed by officers of a regular army, and the officers were sorely handicapped by reason of this state of affairs.

Another difficulty of the officers was found in the chronic lack of money. When men are not promptly paid either in factory, army, or any other place, there is sure to be violent outbreaks of discontent. These soldiers were suffering, they had been promised the money and they needed it,—they needed it both for themselves and for their families. They thought of the legislators as keeping the money for themselves, and in Connecticut they actually started for the capital to raid the legislature. The patience and personal influence of the commanders was put to a severe test to keep the men in comparative order. Then there was constant need of supplies. *Some* clothing must be bought, *some* food must be paid for. Powder was never abundant in the patriot army, and at one time it ran so nearly out that, had all the army been engaged at once, there was not enough left for a day's fighting. Making bricks without straw is a simple

proposition when compared with carrying on a long and important war without money.

A third difficulty of the times was the intermixture of Tories and spies with the patriots. The country at large was patriotic, but there were Tories enough to make a great deal of trouble. Generally speaking, the men of wealth, the successful men of business, and consequently the men of influence, were on the Tory side. These claimed, and very plausibly, to have particular regard for the laws. They were quick to note any infringement of their rights and eager to demand reparation. That they did not equally recognize or respect the rights of others did not disturb them. Consistency is too rare a jewel to be of service in time of war. There were then, as there always is, a large number of unprincipled men who are willing to serve on one side or the other as fancy or the prospect of gain may indicate. The conditions were then favorable for the vocation of the spy, and the army was never free from his interference. Cooper's historical novel *The Spy*, especially the closing portion, sets forth in picturesque manner the conditions which were most depressing. In the patriot army there were large numbers of officers of high station, like Benedict Arnold, who were ready to sell out at a convenient time.

There is a fact which is so slight as to escape the

attention of most readers, but which is of sufficient importance to note here. It is that the patriots had no flag. Even after the stars and stripes were devised by Mrs. Betsey Ross, which was not until the year 1777, it had none of the associations to the men of that day which it has to us who have learned to connect it in thought with all that is noble and glorious in patriotic history. We became familiar with the beautiful emblem in our infancy, we early learned to praise it in song and poem, we have read thrilling stories of the men who have fought, bled, and died for it, and the very sight of it, floating over school-house, fort, or vessel, rouses a noble and patriotic feeling in our souls. This feeling is consonant with the profound facts and verities of human nature. It is found in all countries, it touches all ranks and classes of people, it is an inspiration to all military glory. The citizen resents an insult to the flag, the orator praises the flag, the soldier follows the flag "into the jaws of death, into the mouth of hell," and he is content to have his lifeless body buried under the flag. But the patriots had no flag. Their early associations were with the British emblem, and against it they were now armed and arrayed. They lacked a most important means of help.

The element of personal influence is nearly the same in all ages, and this was an important fact in

the stirring events of the pre-revolutionary period. Putnam's thrift, good sense, and success as a pioneer farmer in Connecticut, gave him an unusual influence with his neighbors. His good fellowship won him many friends. The population of his community was scant, but he was beyond question a leader of the people. He was nearly forty years old when he took part in the French-Indian war, and his daring at that time greatly increased the honor in which he was held. During the period of popular discontent just previous to the outbreak of the revolution, he was one of the most conspicuous men in his colony. He was approaching sixty years of age when the battle of Bunker Hill was fought, and his conduct there shows that he was as fiery and impetuous as when in his 'teens. Confidence begets confidence, and enthusiasm kindles enthusiasm. Though the rank and file did not always follow their leader, they conducted themselves far better than they would or could have done in his absence; and after that battle he was a greater power than ever.

The battle of Bunker Hill was fought June 17, 1775. At that date Putnam was not in commission. The American soldiers were volunteers in a sense far more complete than the technical meaning of the word conveys. It was not until July 2, or two full weeks after the battle, that Washington reached Cam-

bridge, bringing with him commissions for four Major-Generals who had been appointed by the Continental Congress on June 17 and 19. The names, and the order of precedence, of these four, were as follows: Artemas Ward, Charles Lee, Philip Schuyler, and Israel Putnam. Washington, who had these commissions in his possession, was invested with a certain discretionary power as to delivering them. Upon his arrival at Cambridge he found so much of discontent and mutual criticisms among the patriots that he deemed it wise to withhold, for a time, all the commissions except Putnam's. His was the only one that was delivered at once. The others received their commissions shortly afterwards. One by one they dropped out of the war until after the battle of Monmouth in 1778, when Lee, being tried by court-martial for disobedience of orders, was suspended for a year. This left Putnam the ranking Major-General of the army. Even he was not in active service at the close of the war, having been disabled by paralysis.

GENERAL ISRAEL PUTNAM.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY LIFE.

ALMOST every popular favorite has his nickname. They called General Jackson "Old Hickory;" General Taylor was known everywhere through the camp by the name of "Old Zack;" * and, not to interpose too many instances between our own times and his, General Israel Putnam, of Revolutionary memory, was better known by the whole army under the famil-

* The civil war of 1861-5 developed many such nicknames. General Grant was "Unconditional Surrender;" General Thomas, "the Rock of Chickamauga;" General Logan, "the War Eagle;" General Hooker, "fighting Joe Hooker;" General Sheridan was always called by his first name, Phil.

Lincoln was called "old Abe;" Blaine, "the Plumed Knight;" Thurman, "the old Roman;" Reed, "the Czar." It is a trait of the American people, more than of other peoples, to modify the names of its successful men. When they cannot find a taking epithet, they use the first name, or an abbreviation of it, such as *Abe* and *Phil*.

iar title of "Old Put" than either by the military rank he had honestly earned, or the simple Scriptural name his father and mother gave him.

Israel Putnam was a marked character in days when it would appear as if almost every man stood out as an exemplar. He lived in stirring times, and was not a whit behind the rest in helping to create the stir. Few among the long roll of the patriots of the Revolution, addressed themselves to the great questions, as they came up, with greater zeal than he, or with a more stout and rugged determination to secure peace on the basis of simple justice. It must be allowed, too, that he had a strong love for adventure in his nature, and was as ready at any time for a warlike foray, or a dangerous expedition into a wilderness swarming with Indians, as he was for a frolic at harvest-time, or an exciting wolf-hunt with the young farmers in midwinter. The life of Putnam was a romance almost from the beginning; yet no one was apparently better contented than he amid the peaceful scenes of the country life of those days, or enjoyed himself more in the quiet atmosphere of his farm, his home, and his friends. In this respect he might be said, like some other men, to have had *two* natures: one continually exciting him to action and deeds of boldness and bravery, and the other tempering him down to the tone of those homely, every-

day joys that, after all, are the richest resources a man's heart ever knows.

Israel Putnam was born in Salem, Mass., on the 7th day of January, 1718. His mother * had twelve children, of whom he was the eleventh in order. The house still stands in which he was born, and is exactly half-way, on the turnpike, between Newburyport and Boston. The family emigrated from one of the southern counties of England, in the year 1634, and settled in that part of Salem, known as Danvers. The original family name was spelled Puttenham, instead of Putnam. Israel was the great-grandson of the one who first planted the name in that part of the country, Mr. John Putnam; his father's Christian name being Joseph, his grandfather's Thomas, and his great-grandfather's John as just mentioned.

Israel was a courageous boy, and many daring acts of his youth are preserved by tradition among the different branches of the old family stock. He loved adventure and excitement, and was apt to be foremost in those bold and reckless undertakings for which

* Putnam's mother's mother was Elizabeth Hathorne. Her father, William Hathorne, came to this country in 1630, and after a short residence at Dorchester, now a part of Boston, settled permanently in Salem. A lineal descendant of this puritan, Nathaniel Hawthorne (note the change in the spelling of the name) described this William as the "grave, bearded, sable-cloaked, and steeple-crowned progenitor, who came so early, with his bible and his sword."

boys are generally so ready. His early education was limited, as one must readily infer when one reflects that schools of any kind were not a common privilege in those days. The population was very much scattered, instead of being gathered into towns and villages as now, and good schools would have been quite difficult to support. Besides, as he was brought up, the most of his time was required on the farm, helping about the regular work in such ways as boys of his age are taught and expected to do. Had his education been different when he was young, there is no doubt that he would have wrought with a still wider influence on the minds of the men of the Revolution. But it was sufficient proof of his inherent strength and greatness, that he rose, as he did, superior to all the obstacles that he found in his path, and wrote his own name legibly on the page of his country's history. It is not every man, even with the aid of many more advantages than he enjoyed, who succeeds in doing what he did for his countrymen and himself.

We said that he was courageous, and sometimes reckless, when a boy, but his disposition was not quarrelsome. When he was assailed, he stood his ground without flinching; but he was not in the habit of picking quarrels with any one. When he went up to Boston for the first time in his life, one of the

young town-fellows, a great deal older and bigger than himself,* saw him coming along the street in his dress of plain homespun, staring at the signs and the windows, and taken up, as almost every true rustic is, at least once, with what he saw and heard around him; and, thinking to have some fun out of the country fellow, he taunted him with his dress, his gait, his manners, and his general appearance. Young Putnam bore it as well and as long as he could. He looked around and saw that a crowd had collected, who seemed to be enjoying themselves at his expense. His blood rose at length, and he determined to submit no longer. Suddenly he turned upon the ill-mannered city youth, and gave him such a thorough flogging on the spot as not only silenced his impudence, but likewise drew forth the instant admiration of the crowd, who were, but a moment before, so willing to enjoy his own humiliation. This single little affair was wholly characteristic of the man, as he afterwards showed himself on a wider theatre.

Very few incidents of a well-defined and authentic nature, have come down to us in illustration of the boyhood of Putnam; indeed, when we consider that he was nothing more than a plain farmer's boy, of whom no one ever thought, except as other boys were

* Headley says this boy was twice his size and age.

commonly thought of, whose advantages were few, and whose education was limited, who had no other aim in life than simply to do his work well and make as respectable a man as his father before him,—it is evident that few facts could have accumulated at the most, going to show his native superiority to anybody else of his own age and condition. It was after he made himself conspicuous in the eyes of his countrymen, that his relatives began to collect such scanty materials relating to his youth as family tradition chanced to have handed down; not happening to have been born great, or renowned, of course no record was kept of those early years before he achieved for himself what he afterwards so honorably did achieve.*

* Among the stories of the boyhood and youth of Israel Putnam, some are worth preserving. At the early age when boys delight in hunting birds' nests, he was so unfortunate as to fall from a tree by the breaking of a limb; before he reached the ground his trousers caught on a projecting branch, and he hung, head downward, in a position that was equally uncomfortable and unsafe. He called on his companions to release him by shooting the branch so as to cut it in two. The boys demurred, fearing they would shoot him, until he assured them that he would take all the risk. This assurance steadied their nerves, and the shot carried true; the branch was severed and the boy was released.

Later, he tamed a fractious bull by a unique treatment. Arming himself with a pair of cruel spurs, he mounted astride the bull, struck his spurs vigorously into the sides

He was twenty-one years old when he was married, which event occurred in the year 1739.* His wife was Miss Hannah Pope, whose father—Mr. John Pope—lived in Salem also; and their family afterwards counted four sons and six daughters.† The year after he married, he emigrated from Salem to the town of Pomfret, in Connecticut, where he had bought a tract of land for the purpose. The part of

of the furious animal, and rode him until the bull was completely tired out and subdued.

Grim was the humor he displayed in connection with the negro, "Cudge." The master—for slavery obtained in New England at that period—called in Israel Putnam to help him chastise the insubordinate slave. The negro was first to be tied so as to make the process of whipping easier. Putnam, however, slipped the rope over both master and slave, bound them firmly together, then drew taut the other end of the rope, which had been thrown over a beam in the barn, tied the men up, and then left them to settle matters with each other. The negro, naturally enough, was the first to see the fun in the affair, but finally the saving sense of humor penetrated also the white man's intelligence. The affair was settled satisfactorily to all parties concerned, and discipline was fully restored without the use of the lash.

* Before Israel was of age, he assumed the care of the Salem farm. This was the more significant as he was the youngest but one of the family of twelve children. He built for himself a house upon the portion of the farm that was set apart for himself. He was thus an independent farmer before his marriage, which took place when he was twenty-one years of age.

† The first son, named Israel for his father, was born in this farm house in Salem. The other children were born in Connecticut.

Pomfret in which he settled is now included in the pleasant little inland town of Brooklyn; and the outlines of the foundation of his house are still to be distinctly traced in the turf, together with the raised walk up to the door. The well he digged is yet pointed out, though it is not at present used; and in one of the old elm trees that stood before his door, are the iron staples on which he hung the tavern sign, just before the Revolutionary days, to inform travellers that he could temporarily entertain both themselves and their beasts.

There was no better farmer in his day, the whole country round than young Mr. Israel Putnam proved himself to be. He opened new and uncultivated lands; built good walls and fences; stocked his pastures; planted his orchards; erected a comfortable and most delightful homestead; and, by his thrift, industry, and true agricultural taste, succeeded, in a short time, in establishing himself as a well-to-do and most successful farmer. He had a young family brood growing up about him. His herds and flocks increased and multiplied. He found that his land was especially adapted to the raising of sheep, and, accordingly, he bent his energies to the production of wool. So successful was he in this enterprise in a brief period of time, that he was popularly reckoned one of the largest wool growers of the country, and

his profits accumulated at a rate that soon put him in circumstances beyond the possible reach of poverty or want.*

It was owing altogether to his having taken so extensive an interest in the raising of sheep, that his adventure with the wolf became a piece of history. During several seasons he seemed to have suffered from rather hard luck, both in his crops and his live stock; what with drought, and dry-rot, and hard winters, he felt that his losses, continued through several ensuing years, were quite as large as he felt able to submit to. But when it came to the losses in his sheep-fold, which were more and more severe every winter, he roused himself to see if the mischief

* In 1739, Putnam and his brother-in-law, John Pope, who was also twenty-one years of age, bought a farm of a little more than 500 acres in Pomfret, Connecticut, for the sum of £2,572. Putnam built for himself a small house and cleared as much ground as he could. He then (1740) returned for his wife and child and removed them to their new home. His industry and energy quickly bore fruit. Within a year he not only bought out his partner but paid off the full amount of the mortgage and received his quitclaim deed June 13, 1741. He also had the luxury of a negro servant. The farm was well located and the virgin soil fertile. The crop of boulders was quickly transformed into fences after the manner of New England farming. In addition to grain, vegetables, and live stock, the products included lumber, while a variety of apple trees enriched the place. This farming life was remarkably remunerative from the very first.

could not by some means be stopped where it was. It was pretty conclusively proved that the work of slaughter was performed by a single she-wolf, who, with her new family of whelps every year, came from a long distance to get her regular winter's living off the fatlings of his hillsides and pastures. Nor was he the only sufferer by her bold depredations. Nearly all the neighboring farmers were forced to submit to these losses, as well as himself, and they were quite ready to undertake, with him, the destruction of the ravenous creature who was committing such a general havoc.

This she-wolf was an old jade, and very sly and shrewd withal. Almost every year the hunters, with their dogs, had fallen in with some of her whelps, and made an end of them on the spot; but they never could manage to come upon *her* in a position from which she did not possess the cunning to somehow escape. Once they had succeeded in getting her to put her foot into their steel-trap; but rather than wait for them to come to a final settlement with her for her many crimes, she concluded she had better lose her toes and make the best of her way off without them. She preferred to sacrifice these, and so save her skin whole.

Putnam got together five of his neighbors, therefore, and laid before them his proposal to hunt the

old wolf down; not to give her any further rest or peace until they got her into a place from which there could be no escape. The arrangement was, that they were to take turns at the business, two at a time, and follow her up day and night, till she was traced to her den, unless they might have the good luck to destroy her before she reached it. It was early in the winter when the pursuit began, and, as it happened, a light snow had fallen to aid them in their design. The clipped toes of one of the creature's feet, too, would assist the hunters in following her track, of which fact they were not slow to take advantage.

They came upon her footprints, after a time, and pursued her along by this single mark of the lost toes through the country to the Connecticut river; showing that she was at least an extensive traveller. Reaching the river's bank, and finding her course thus intercepted, back she started again for Pomfret. The hunters were close upon her, and readily found where she had doubled upon herself. They pressed on as hastily as they could, over hill and through vale, pushing through swamps and wooded places after her, as if nothing had stood in her way. At an early hour on the second morning after setting out, they had succeeded in driving her into her den in a rocky ledge, situated some three miles to the north from

Putnam's house, and within the limits of the town of Pomfret.

She was carefully watched by one of the men, while the other went to give the alarm to the farmers around. It was not long before the woods in the vicinity of the cave were swarming with the male inhabitants of the town, including a pretty large sprinkling of boys. They brought along with them a liberal supply of dogs, guns, straw, and sulphur, prepared to smoke her out, burn her out, punch her out, or, in any event, to shoot her. The shouting and the clamor resounded a great ways from the steep hill-side where the transaction took place, as if they had come with the intention to make a good time of it. The boys, in particular, were delighted with the prospect of the fun there was ahead, and kicked and capered about in the exuberance of their spirits. It was a great thing for them to be allowed to take a part in such sport with their elders.

After a council of war had been held, and a close scrutiny of the retreat chosen by their crafty enemy had been indulged in, it was generally concluded that the wolf was not such a great fool in going into this cavity as they might have thought her. She was, to all intents and purposes, in her fortress. How should they go to work to get her out? At first they tried tantalization,—sending in their dogs, who came out

again yelping and crying, with lacerated skins, and torn and bloody noses, showing how skilfully she had used her claws in her own defence. They could not prevail on the dogs that had tried the entrance once, to go in the second time. So they next hit upon the plan to stuff in lighted bundles of straw, sprinkled liberally with sulphur, hoping thus to smoke her out. They very truly argued that, if she could stand that, she must be too much for *them* to think of attacking. Accordingly, the straw was piled in, and set on fire. The dense volumes of smoke rose and rolled slowly into the cave, and they thought they were going to secure their game this time without any further trouble. But they looked, and continued to look in vain for the appearance of anything like a wolf. The smoke could not have reached her; or, if it did, it failed to have the effect upon her they had calculated.

Time was wearing on in this way, and nothing seemed likely to come of all their labor at last. It wanted now but about a couple of hours to midnight. They were not willing to go home and leave their dreaded enemy where she was, unharmed, and free to repeat her bloody mischief. Again they tried to coax the dogs to go in; but they could not so readily make the animals forget the rough treatment they had received on a previous visit. Israel Putnam

felt the need of some one's making a decisive movement, lest the matter should fall through entirely. He therefore ordered a man-servant to undertake the step needed; but he declined very positively. An appeal was made to the whole company present, to know if there was any one who dared undertake this most undesirable piece of business; but the appeal was made in vain. Neither man nor boy was willing to risk his life in an encounter with a mad animal at the further end of a subterranean cave, which had already shown such a disposition to stand her ground and face her opponents down at any hazard.

Finally it became difficult to endure this state of suspense any longer, and Putnam took his resolution. It was a bold, and no doubt a very reckless one; but when he considered, in a flash of his thought, the amount of the losses incurred by his neighbors as well as himself, from the depredations of this ravenous wild beast, he wondered how it was possible for any one to hesitate. He declared he would go down and meet the old wolf himself. The farmers were overwhelmed with astonishment, and tried to dissuade him from carrying out his rash purpose. But all they could say had no effect whatever upon him. He was determined to put an end to the existence of the wolf, and to do it on that very night.

Well aware of the fear inspired in a wild animal

by the sight of fire, he provided himself with a large quantity of birch bark, torn into shreds, before going into the cave, and lighted a sufficient number for his immediate purpose. These furnished all the light he had by which to guide himself along the winding passages of the rocky cavern. Stripping off his coat and waistcoat, with a lighted torch in one hand, he entered the dark aperture at near midnight, crawling slowly upon his hands and knees.

The mouth of the wolf's den was about two feet square. From this point it proceeds downwards about fifteen feet, then it runs horizontally for some ten feet more, and afterwards it ascends very easily for sixteen feet towards its termination. The sides of the cave are of solid rock, and quite smooth; the top and bottom are of the same material; it is but three feet in width, and in no part can a man stand upright. Putnam groped his way along by the aid of his flaring and smoking torches, until he reached the level portion of the cavity. All was still as a tomb, and his feeble torchlight was able to penetrate but a little distance into the surrounding gloom. He was obliged to advance but slowly, and every few moments it became necessary for him to renew his torch, which he did with the greatest care, lest it might go out in the lighting, and he be left in the profoundest darkness.

After creeping over the ten feet of the level portion of the cave, he came to the ascent. Onward he dragged his slow and toilsome way, till his progress was suddenly arrested by the sight of a pair of glaring eyeballs at the very extremity of the cavern. There sat the old wolf herself; and, as she saw the flash of the torch he carried in his hand, she gnashed her teeth and uttered a low and threatening growl. The brave and venturesome young farmer took a hasty view of things in the cave, and then gave a kick at the rope which his friends had tied about one of his legs before he made the descent, by way of precaution. Fearing that the worst had befallen him, they pulled more excitedly at the rope than was necessary; and, before he could have protested against such rough treatment, he found himself dragged out upon the ground before the mouth of the cave, with "his shirt stripped over his head, and his skin severely lacerated." They had heard the growl of the wolf outside, and feared that he was involved in a struggle with her for life or death. Besides, it was known that he had carried no weapons into the cave with him, and they were more solicitous on that account.

This time, however, he loaded his gun, took more torches, and went down better prepared for the encounter. He knew his way along of course better

than before; but he was now burdened with his musket. When he came in sight of the wolf again, she was in the same place and position, but appeared a great deal more dissatisfied with his company. The account of his early biographer and personal friend states that she wore an aspect of great fierceness: "howling, rolling her eyes, snapping her teeth, and dropping her head between her legs. She was evidently in the attitude, and on the point of springing at her assailant. At that critical moment he levelled his piece, aiming directly at her head, and fired. Stunned with the shock, and suffocated with the smoke of the powder, he immediately found himself drawn out of the cave." But this time his friends took a little more care not to strip his shirt over his shoulders, nor to tear his skin against the jagged edges of the rock.

He allowed a few moments for the smoke to escape from the chambers of the cavern, and then went in again to secure his prize. On examination he found his old enemy lying dead on the floor of the cave at its further extremity, in a pool of blood. He had taken aim to some purpose. In order to satisfy himself that she was really dead, he applied his torch to her nose; she made no * signs of life. Accord-

* This adventure with the wolf, by which perhaps more

ingly, he seized her by her ears, gave the rope around his leg an exulting kick, and out he went, with his precious prize dragging after him, into the midst of the crowd at the mouth of the cavern, who showered their praises and congratulations upon him without stint. They sent up a shout of delight that filled the wintry woods with its echoes. Their arch enemy at length lay stretched out stark and stiff at their feet.

From that hour, Israel Putnam was a hero in the eyes and mouth of everybody. He came very soon to be known far and wide as the slayer of the old she-wolf that had made such havoc with the farmer's folds, and people loved to repeat a story that had

than by anything else, Putnam's early life is remembered, does not command unqualified approval. A more prudent and equally effective method would have been to block the mouth of the cave with an impassible trap, or even to wall it up with masonry. But this safe method would have lacked the dramatic element demanded by so ardent a nature as Putnam's.

The real value of this incident is that it shows that Putnam had no sense of fear. The reader will readily recall the parallel of Admiral Nelson. At the age of fifteen young Nelson attacked a polar bear with no weapon but a pike-staff. When asked if he was not afraid, he replied: "Sir, I am not acquainted with Mr. Fear."

On the other hand, the greatest general of the XIXth century, U. S. Grant, and the greatest warrior of the XVIIth century, Marshal Turenne, of France, were decidedly susceptible to fear. Grant outgrew this early in the war, and Turenne overcame it by pure force of will.



Israel Putnam kills the Wolf and brings her out of her den.—Page 24.

such decided elements of romance and daring in it; for it excited them quite as much in the telling as it did others in the hearing. The story grew, too, as it travelled, and Putnam's fame of course grew along with it. He was known among the officers of the army, with whom he fought during the Seven Years' War, as "the Old Wolf;" and his fame reached England through the aid of the public journals, which are generally not behind in chronicling such a truly bold and daring adventure.*

The dozen years that Putnam followed the peaceful pursuits of a farmer, between this notable event and the breaking out of the French war, he industriously made the most of. In that time, by his thrifty management, he laid the foundation of a permanent and abundant fortune, for those days of simplicity, and provided for those wants, which otherwise must have been unprovided for entirely, appertaining to advanced age and a life generously spent in behalf of the liberties of his country. When he retired from public service altogether, it was a comfortable reflection for him that he had a good home to which to withdraw his weary self, where he might

* The wolf-den, being a part of the everlasting hills, is still to be seen in the town of Pomfret, and it is the Mecca of many a student of the history of early patriotism. The den is unchanged except for an inscription on one of the rocks at its entrance.

pass his latest years unreached by the gripe of poverty and want, and secure in the friendship and affection of the happy family group that there budded and blossomed like beautiful plants around him.

CHAPTER II.

THE FRENCH WAR.

THE struggle between the English and the French for the mastery of this continent, deserves more than the mere allusion to it as an historical fact, which is all we are able in this place to give. The Indians that swarmed in the northern forests, and about the lakes and streams, were, the greater part of them, enlisted on the side of the French, and showed themselves ready to perform any of those barbarities that were asked of them in the wild excitement of the times. These Indians were the worst foes that ever white men were forced to meet. They were stealthy and secret; they skulked and hid in every nook and corner; they started out unexpectedly from every tree in the forest. In their dispositions they were vindictive and remorseless; they would fight for pay rather than from friendship, and hence employed both the tomahawk and the scalping-knife without either measure or mercy. Such an enemy was a thousand times more dangerous to encounter than an open enemy; because the English were at no time certain

that he would not come upon them when they were least expecting it.

It required unusually prudent, sagacious, and brave men to officer a force that should be sent out to meet an enemy, too, with such an ally. Hence, the colonial governments were frequently at a loss how to act, so as not to compromise the safety of the people for whom they were authorized to act.

This so-called French War began in the year 1755, with three separate military expeditions: one of General Shirley against Fort Niagara; one of General Braddock, against Fort Duquesne; and a third of Sir William Johnson against Baron Dieskau, at Fort Edward, situated on Lake George.* This last had a

* The Seven Years' War was at the outset a conflict between Frederick the Great and Maria Theresa over the question of the succession to the throne of Austria. The international complications were such that nearly every nation in Europe was drawn into the war. The conflict between France and England was fought out not on European soil, but in India and America, and it resulted in both these countries establishing English dominance. In America, the English and French colonists knew little and cared less about the Austrian succession; yet it was the discussion of that question that made this continent English rather than French.

William Shirley (1705?-1771), was appointed royal governor of Massachusetts in 1741, and commander-in-chief of the British forces in America in 1755.

Edward Braddock (1715?-1755), is chiefly known by his defeat by the Indians and his death in a battle near Pittsburg, while he was on his way to fort Duquesne. George

successful termination; the others were fruitless and unfortunate.

Israel Putnam received an appointment to the captaincy of a company of provincial soldiers, volunteers of Connecticut, and this company composed a part of the regiment under command of General Lyman. Everybody knew Putnam for a fearless and trusty man; and although it is positive that he had had no previous military experience, yet his winning frankness and hearty honesty soon attracted to his standard a crowd of the finest young men the whole colony afforded. It was a deserved compliment to such a man, and he would certainly have been the last one to betray the high confidence thus reposed in him.

The expedition, of which his company and regiment formed a part, had for its object the reduction of Crown Point, a fortified place on Lake Cham-

Washington served under him in that disastrous battle, and to him it is due that the entire British force was not annihilated.

Sir William Johnson (1715?-1774), was noted for the influence he exercised over the Indians. He later wrote a treatise on the customs and languages of the Indians.

Baron Ludwig August von Dieskau (died in 1767), was a German officer in the French service. In 1755 he was sent to Quebec as field marshal (*maréchal-de-camp*). After his capture he was sent to England, and upon his release he went to France. The closing years of his life he spent in and near Paris.

plain. Massachusetts Colony started the project, and she, together with Connecticut and New York, was determined to carry it out to success if possible. The command of the entire expedition was given to General William Johnson, one of the leading men in the New York Colony, and the troops were to collect at Albany as a central dépôt. It was late in June when they assembled. Early in August they began to move forward, and reached the point from which all the necessary accompaniments of warlike operations were to be transported across the land to Lake George. Gen. Lyman had already begun to erect a fortification at this point, which went by the name of Fort Edward.

Later in August, the main body of the army took up its march, and pressed on till it reached the southern point of Lake George. It was learned from Indian scouts that a large body of French and Indians were stationed at Ticonderoga, since become an immortal name, which is the point at which Lake George empties, with its thundering sound, into Lake Champlain. They had not yet thrown up any works there, and Johnson therefore felt more desirous to proceed as soon as possible, with a part of his army, and seize the place before they could recover sufficiently from their astonishment at his appearance, to make a proper defence.

But Baron Dieskau, the French commander, had, in the meantime, become apprised of the position and projects of the provincial forces at Fort Edward, and hastened to attack them before their works were all completed. If he could succeed in this plan, it was then his determination to move down upon Albany, and the other towns within reach, and lay them waste with all possible celerity. Accordingly, he took two thousand men with him from Crown Point, and, landing at South Bay, started across the land for Fort Edward. He even kept the design of this movement a secret until he had come within a couple of miles of the provincial forces. When he at length made his plans known, the Indians murmured, declaring they never would fight against the cannon and musketry of the English. This obliged him, therefore, to change his purpose, and he pushed on towards the north, to surprise the English at the southern point of Lake George. General Johnson was in command there, as already stated. His scouts came into camp and informed him of the approach of Dieskau, with his Canadian and Indian allies.

It was at once determined to send forward a detachment to meet them, and offer them battle. Col. Williams * commanded the entire body, which con-

* Ephraim Williams (1715-1755), was born at Newton, Massachusetts; "served in King George's war; built Fort

sisted of a thousand provincials and about two hundred friendly Indians. They came upon the French some four miles out from the camp, and found the latter all skilfully prepared to meet them. Dieskau had arranged the French troops in the centre, while the Canadians and Indians were stationed along in the woods on either wing, so as to surround the English

Massachusetts (near Williamstown, Massachusetts); commanded a regiment of Massachusetts troops in the French and Indian war; and fell in an ambuscade" near Lake George. His memory is perpetuated in Williams College.

"Leaving a garrison in Fort Edward, Johnson moved with about 5,000 men to the head of Lake George, and there formed a camp, intending to descend into Lake Champlain. Hendrick, the celebrated Mohawk chief, with his warriors, were among these troops. Israel Putnam, too, was there as a captain, and John Stark as a lieutenant, each taking lessons in warfare. The French were not idle; the district of Montreal made the most strenuous exertions to meet the invading foe. All the men who were able to bear arms were called into active service; so that, to gather in the harvest, their places were supplied by men from other districts. The energetic Baron Dieskau resolved, by a bold attack, to terrify the invaders. Taking with him 200 regulars, and about 1200 Canadians and Indians, he set out to capture Fort Edward; but, as he drew near, the Indians heard that it was defended by cannon, which they greatly dreaded, and they refused to advance. He now changed his plan, and resolved to attack Johnson's camp, which was supposed to be without cannon. Meantime scouts had reported to Johnson that they had seen roads made through the woods in the direction of Fort Edward. Not knowing the movements of Dieskau, a detachment of 1,000 men, under Colonel Ephraim Williams, of Massachusetts, and 200 Mohawks, under Hendrick,

forces as soon as they had advanced far enough into this well-set trap. Had not the engagement begun as soon as it did, the plan of the French Baron would unquestionably have worked well; but, as it was, it did not operate quite so exactly to his mind. The provincials fought like the brave men they were, and were forced at last to fall back. Col. Williams was slain in the battle, and so was Hendrick, the famous Mohawk Indian chief, who had been a firm friend to the English and provincials.

The vanquished forces retreated till they reached the main body, under General Johnson. This engagement had taken place before noon. It was just about noon, then, when the French forces came up to

marched to relieve that post. The French had information of their approach and placed themselves in ambush. They were concealed among the thick bushes of a swamp on the one side, and rocks and trees on the other side. The English recklessly marched into the defile. They were vigorously attacked and thrown into confusion. Hendrick was almost instantly killed, and in a short time Williams fell also."—Patton.

On this march Colonel Williams asked Hendrick if he thought their force sufficient. The sagacious Mohawk answered: "If they are to fight, they are too few; if they are to be killed, they are too many. It was then proposed to divide up the force. Hendrick picked up three sticks, put them together, and said: "These cannot easily be broken, but take them one by one and you may break them at once." He probably realized that he was marching on to his death.

renew the battle, flushed and eager with their recent victory. On each side of the American position, which was upon the bank of Lake George, lay a swamp, densely covered with trees. Gen. Johnson had mounted a few pieces of cannon, which he had fortunately received from Fort Edward, and a breastwork was hastily constructed by felling trees. On came the French in regular order, expecting only a second victory. After pausing for a brief moment at a distance from the breastworks, they fell upon the centre with great spirit, while the Canadians and Indians attacked the two flanks in the hope of turning them.

The assault upon the centre did not prove as destructive to the provincial forces as was calculated; on the contrary, the latter took fresh courage on seeing how little damage the French were able to do them. As soon as they began to play their cannon upon the advancing enemy with such terrible effect, the allied Indians and Canadians took to their heels in a paroxysm of fear, being quite unused to so destructive an engine of warfare. Baron Dieskau in consequence was obliged to retreat in great haste and confusion, and his force was hotly pursued by a portion of the provincial army. The Baron himself was wounded, and found leaning against a stump, all alone. An American seeing him feeling for his

watch, with which he probably hoped to bribe his pursuers, supposed he was searching for his pistol; upon which he inflicted upon him a wound in the hip with a musket ball, which finally proved mortal. He was carried a prisoner into the camp in a blanket, and treated tenderly. Afterwards he was taken to Albany, then to New York, and finally to England.

Being pursued for some four miles, the French at length halted to refresh themselves on the very ground where the battle of the morning had been fought. How different were their feelings then, from their feelings of a few brief hours before! Meantime Gen. Lyman had despatched a force up from Fort Edward to the assistance of Gen. Johnson, and the detachment he had sent forward came upon them while they were thus refreshing themselves on the morning's battlefield. A second time they were routed, and, on this occasion, most thoroughly. Many prisoners were taken and carried into camp. Thus opened the English successes on the continent against the French forces, with this brilliant victory of Lake George. This was the battle in which Joseph Brant,*

* Joseph Brant (1740-1807), whose Indian name was Thay-en-da-ne-gea, was born on the banks of the Ohio river, and was educated at Hanover, New Hampshire, in the school that afterwards became Dartmouth College. He became a Christian and was zealous in good works: he translated parts of the Bible into his native tongue, and was

the famous Mohawk Indian, then but thirteen years old, first learned the art of war from taking an active part in it.

Gen. Johnson at once proceeded to erect a fort where he was encamped, which he named Fort William Henry. Israel Putnam not long afterwards reached the camp at Lake George, where, during the remainder of the season, his active temperament and love of perilous performances peculiarly fitted him for the duties which were then assigned him. As a ranger, volunteering his services on occasions of great danger, and when much caution was necessary, no man in the provincial army could, at that day, surpass or equal him. It fell to him, in this capacity, to find out where the enemy were, what was their strength, to be continually alarming their pickets,

unremitting in his efforts to improve the intellectual, social, moral, and spiritual condition of the Indians. He won universal esteem as a cultivated Christian gentleman. He went as representative of the Six Nations to England, where his intelligence, courtliness of manner, and high character secured for him much influence. In the war of the revolution he held from the king the commission of colonel in the British army, and in central New York he led the Tories in many a raid that greatly harassed the patriots. He was a brave soldier, and, like other brave soldiers, was always magnanimous. At the close of that war he used his influence among the Indians to persuade them to engage in the arts of peace. "He was sagacious and brave, chivalrous and faithful, kind and gentle, and unquestionably the greatest Indian of whom we have any knowledge."

to devise ways of harassing and surprising them, to act as a partisan scout in fetching information from the hostile parties, and in performing all those other active labors that are of the most effective service to the success of a military campaign on an uninhabited frontier.

Once, during that season, he set out with Captain Rogers * and a small party to reconnoitre the defences at Crown Point. The forest in the vicinity was alive with Indians, and it was at the same time impossible for the whole party to approach within the desirable distance of the fort. They concealed the men, therefore, in the woods not far off, and went by

* Robert Rogers was born in Londonderry, New Hampshire, in 1727. Nothing is known of his life until 1755, when he entered the provincial military service as commander of a corps known as "Rogers' Rangers." His work, which was chiefly that of scout, was of great value to the English. In the war of the Revolution he sided with the British, was arrested on suspicion, violated his parole to congress, accepted the commission of colonel in the British army, was tried by New Hampshire, proscribed and banished. In 1778 he went to England, after which time he is lost to view. It is by some supposed that he died in England about 1800. At the time of the French-Indian war his services as scout were of great value to the British, and in this capacity he ranked next to Putnam. But his wanton cruelty was in marked contrast to Putnam's humanity. He promptly murdered the wounded so as to save himself the trouble of caring for them. "As a man his deserts were small; as a bush-fighter he was beyond reproach."

themselves to reconnoitre. Creeping along in the dark, they soon came near to the fort, where they remained secreted all through the night, but without obtaining as much knowledge as they went after. Towards morning they were more successful; and, while returning by different ways to the place where their party lay concealed, a French guard came suddenly upon Capt. Rogers, and made an effort to stab him, while he also gave the alarm. They clinched and struggled. Meantime the guard answered to the alarm. Putnam learned the cause of the trouble, and in an instant flew to his companion's rescue. With a single well-directed blow from the butt of his musket upon the head of the Frenchman, he laid him out upon the ground, stark and dead. Immediately the two bold rangers hastened to rejoin their little party, with whom they made the best of their way out of the reach of their enemies.

It was now late in the season, it being in the month of October. Of course it was impracticable to attempt anything more of a hostile nature during that year, especially as Crown Point was ascertained to be too strongly fortified to be assailed at present. The greater part of the army was therefore discharged, leaving but six hundred men as a force with which to garrison both Fort Edward and Fort William Henry. During the same season, too, the

French descended the lake and took military possession of Ticonderoga, which they proceeded to fortify. Putnam's company were disbanded with the other colonial regiments, and he returned home to pass the winter in the quiet retirement of his farm in Connecticut.

The next year's campaign had the same objects in view with that of the last. Owing, however, to the victories that had been achieved by the French commander, Montcalm,* at Fort Ontario and Fort Oswego, the plans of the campaign were altogether disarranged. An expedition was set on foot against Crown Point, which was to be conducted by Gen. Winslow, with provincial troops alone; but the unex-

* Montcalm collected a force of 5,000 Canadians, Frenchmen, and Indians at Frontenac (now Kingston), at the foot of Lake Ontario, crossed the lake to Oswego, and, Aug. 11, 1756, attacked and soon captured Fort Ontario, on the east side of the river. On the 14th he captured Oswego with 1,400 prisoners, besides large quantities of arms, ammunition, provisions and other stores, and the vessels lying in the harbor.

The Marquis of Montcalm (1712-1759), was well educated and rose to distinction in the army in France. In 1756 he succeeded Baron von Dieskau as commander-in-chief of the French army in America. His military operations, though ultimately unsuccessful, always displayed skill, courage, and humanity. He was mortally wounded in the storming of Quebec in 1759. When told that he must soon die, he quietly said: "So much the better; I shall not live to see the surrender of Quebec."

pected success of Montcalm had the effect to throw the English altogether on the defensive. Putnam was still at the head of a company, serving under his former commander. Abercrombie commanded the entire forces until past the middle of the summer; in August he was displaced by Lord Loudon.* The English generals were in constant expectation of being attack by the French, and therefore assumed an attitude almost exclusively defensive.

Putnam, in this campaign, acted the bold part of a

* John Campbell (1705-1782), was the fourth Earl of Loudon. Though he rose to considerable distinction in England, his name is recalled by Americans with feelings of aversion. In 1756 he was appointed Governor of Virginia and commander-in-chief of the British forces in America. He transferred to Dinwiddie the actual government of the colony, while he himself went direct from New York, where he landed, to Albany to assume control of military affairs. His attempt at the capture of the fort of Louisbourg resulted in an amazing fiasco. Setting out with a large fleet, he landed 10,000 soldiers at Halifax, and for a month practiced gardening and played at war by sham fights, etc. The troops had by that time become dispirited and Loudon was superseded by General Amherst, who captured the fort. Loudon was taken to England, tried by court-martial, and acquitted. He was made lieutenant-general in 1758, and general in 1770. His most salient characteristic was his haughtiness, imperiously disregarding the privileges and rights both of citizens and of his subordinates. He was characterized by indolence, indecision, and general inefficiency. Franklin wittily said of him that he was "like King George upon the sign posts, always on horse-back but never advancing."

ranger. This duty required a person of peculiar qualifications, and such had he in perfection. He was daring, and even reckless, and, at the same time, he knew how to be cautious and wary as an Indian. His active and ardent temperament fitted him above most other men for so responsible and arduous a service. He excelled in two important qualities,—courage and caution. He could be bold, and he also knew how to keep silence. United with his other rare qualities was an instinctive sagacity, which piloted himself and his little party many a time safely through dangers with which other men, perhaps fully as brave, would have been overwhelmed. Indeed, considering the history of Israel Putnam's military exploits from first to last, it must be said of him, in summing up the whole, that he excelled chiefly as a military partisan—in scouting expeditions, forays, or guerilla warfare. No man in the army was more impetuous yet more cool, more daring and reckless and still more self-controlled, than he. And it was this which made his services so brilliant and so valuable during the protracted terms of both the French and Indian, and the Revolutionary War.

Once, during this campaign of 1756, he was directed to take some observations, and report concerning the camp of the enemy at the "Ovens." This was but a little way from Ticonderoga. Taking along

with him Lieut. Durkee,* he started off on his perilous but most welcome errand. Nothing suited him better than excitement and danger. The business was to be performed in the night, and required therefore all the more caution. The French army, when they lay down at night to sleep in the forest, kindled their fires in the centre of the camp and slept on the outside of the circle, quite within the protection afforded by the darkness. The custom of the English and provincial army was just the contrary. Putnam and his friend did not happen to be aware of this fact. Hence, they made their way up thoughtlessly toward the fires of the French, on their hands and knees of course, and had gone some distance within the enemy's lines before they became aware of their desperate situation. They were discovered by the sentinels, who at once fired upon them. His friend was wounded in the thigh, but Putnam was unhurt. The latter wheeled and rushed into the darkness again; but suddenly he found himself lying all in a heap at the bottom of a clay pit. Hardly had he come to himself sufficiently to understand where he was, when in plunged another person after him. Putnam raised the butt of his musket to break his head, when a voice asked him if he was hurt. He

* Lieutenant Durkee was burned at the stake by the Seneca Indians at the massacre of Wyoming, July 4, 1778.

recognized the voice as that of his friend, Lieut. Durkee. In the greatest haste—quite as great, if possible, as they had found their way into the pit—they both scrambled out, and made off into the forest in the midst of a rain of ineffective bullets from the enemy.

They lay under a large log during the rest of the night, and found the light of the silent stars much more agreeable company than they probably would have found that of the hostile camp-fires. It is related that when Putnam unslung his canteen, to divide the rum it held with his wounded and fainting comrade, he found to his surprise that a stray bullet from the sentinel had pierced, and entirely emptied it of its contents.*

The provincial camp was much troubled by the prowling incursions of the Indians, who used to come about in the stillness of the night and carry off the sentinels, no one could tell how or whither. It was one of the greatest mysteries that excited their curiosity, or their superstitious fears. One of the outposts had suffered more than any of the others. At last it became so hazardous to serve as guard,—no soul of those who were missing ever coming back, or sending back any tidings of his fate,—that not a

* It is also related that Putnam found fourteen bullet-holes through his blanket.

man could be found who was willing to put his life in peril in occupying it. All were appealed to, but in vain. They were not ready to volunteer in a service where they felt certain there was not even a chance in their favor. Some of the best and bravest men had volunteered on that post, and never been heard of again.

It had come to such a pass at length, that the commanders were about to proceed to draw men by lot for the place, when Putnam stepped forth with his usual promptitude, eager to brave the danger, and pluck out the heart of the mystery. He need not have done this, for, as an officer, he would not have been liable to be drawn with the rest; but he suffered that consideration to make no difference. He offered to garrison the post for that night himself, and his offer was accepted. The directions were, at hearing the least noise, he was to ask, "Who goes there?" three times; and, if no answer was returned, then to fire immediately. With these instructions fresh in his mind, he went out and took his station. In the first place, he made a thorough and most minute examination of every object within sight and reach. He laid down in his mind exactly how trees, rocks, bushes, and stumps stood relatively to each other, and photographed their appearance in his memory. Then,

seeing, that his firearm was in perfect order, he waited and watched for the terrible mystery.

There was a moon in the sky that night, by whose pale light even those objects with which he had already become familiar, looked weird and spectral. For several hours nothing occurred that attracted his attention. Midnight wore on, but no manifestations of any lurking danger yet. By and by, however, he thought he heard a slight noise in the wild grass. He gave it all his attention. Then, what sounded like a wild animal, came straying along, gradually nearing his position. Finally the animal seemed to take the appearance and nature of a wild hog; and, to carry out the resemblance, it busied itself with cracking the acorns it grubbed up underneath the trees. Putnam saw it all, and heard it all. His thought was always quick, and rarely did it lead him far astray. Even a hog should not be permitted to pass the lines, he declared to himself, unless he gave the countersign. Accordingly, he raised his musket to his shoulder, and called out, "*Who goes there?*" *three times*, and fired. The hog gave a deep groan, straightened out in the agonies of death, and instantly lay a lifeless heap on the ground. On going up to examine it, he discovered that he had only shot a treacherous and wily *Indian*, who had disguised himself in a bear-skin, and thus picked off the unsuspecting sen-

tinels from this dangerous post night after night. There was no longer any fear among the soldiers of standing sentry on *that* post. The heart of the mystery had been laid open, and this was what there was in it.

Putnam was likewise the leader and master-spirit of another excursion against the enemy that season, which added much to the increasing lustre of his fame. It appears that some five or six hundred of the French had made a descent on the stores and baggage of the English army, at a place about half way between Fort Edward and Fort William Henry, and carried off a large quantity of provisions as booty. The soldiers who were escorting the train were not numerous enough to protect it against the vastly greater force of the assailants, and were obliged to yield it up altogether. Putnam was ordered, with about a hundred men in boats, carrying with them two small pieces of cannon, besides their ordinary arms, to head them off on their return down Wood Creek into Lake Champlain. They all started off in high spirits, and sailed down Lake George in their batteaux, with the resolution to punish the insolence of the enemy wherever they might fall in with him.

They landed at a certain point far enough down the lake, and there disembarked, leaving their boats under a sufficient guard, and marched rapidly across

to the narrows of Lake Champlain, where they took their stand and waited for the thieving rascals to come up. The place in which Putnam concealed the men was admirably selected, and so hidden by the trees and bushes that no one sailing down the lake would look for danger from such a quarter. The body of the water at that point, also, was not so wide but his guns could sweep it for the whole distance. As the French came sailing by, the party in ambush suddenly poured in upon them a terrible volley of shot, which performed most remarkable execution. The rowers were killed, the boats were sunk, and they were so huddled together in the confusion that they afforded a surer mark for the fire of the provincials. Only a few of the boats managed to escape, and these with the aid of the wind that blew up the lake very strongly. By this means the encampment at Ticonderoga were advised of the mortifying mishap to the expedition, and hastened to wreak their vengeance upon its authors before they could return to headquarters.

It was in the expectation of something like this that the rangers betook themselves back to their boats with all possible speed, knowing that their condition was a desperate, if not an utterly hopeless one, should they be intercepted before they reached the water. They had some twenty miles to make, in order to do

this; but they were successful. The French hurried after them by way of the lake above, and, of course, must have made much headway even before the rangers embarked again, which was at night. The very next day they saw their enemy on shore in large numbers. They must have silently passed them somewhere during the night. It of course was not long before the French spied them coming, and took to their boats with great speed, determined to fight them in line on the lake.

The French appeared extremely exultant, as if the battle had been fought and the victory had been already won. Up they sailed in regular array, supposing that the provincials, who could not have numbered more than one to their three, would be so stricken with terror at their approach that they would decline fighting altogether. Not until they came within shot of them, did the small party of brave fellows under Putnam open fire; and then they gave them, all at once, the full contents both of their cannon and their muskets. This reception dismayed the French. They had counted on nothing of the kind. They supposed they had been sailing up to an easy, and perhaps a bloodless, victory. Continuing thus to pour in volley after volley, and not allowing the enemy to recover themselves sufficiently to rally for one strong effort, the provincials very soon succeeded

in scattering the flotilla of French boats, and driving them off the field of battle.

The provincials were the victors. The French lost a great number of their men, and the Indians fell into the lake in scores. What is very strange, there was but one man out of the provincial force killed in this sharp engagement, and but two were wounded, and they only slightly, while the loss of the French, including their previous loss on Lake Champlain, on their return from the foraging excursion, amounted to hardly less than five hundred. The French learned a pretty dear lesson by it all; and, certainly, if nothing else were to be said about it, they paid at a costly rate for the provisions they were guilty of stealing from the escort at Half Way Brook.

CHAPTER III.

CONTINUATION OF THE FRENCH WAR.

HAD Israel Putnam kept a record of his varied and most exciting experience from the time his life began to be of public interest, it would have secured an attentive perusal to the latest generations. But he was doing greater things than he knew, like many others who are noble and heroic themselves without being aware of it. The next year, 1757, he received a major's commission from the Connecticut Legislature; showing in what deservedly high esteem he was held by those with whom the public interests were left to be administered.

Thus far, it certainly could not be denied that the English arms had met with but indifferent success in the war then waging with the French. This was in no sense to be charged to the want of efficiency or courage on the part of the colonists, in coöperating with them in their plans; the fault lay elsewhere. The officers who were appointed to direct the operations of the army were not the men they should have been; they knew little or nothing of the country, being sent

over from England solely for the purpose of supervising what they knew little about. They could not be expected, either, to feel that close sympathy with the condition and prospects of the colonists which was so essential to the success of their warlike plans; and, by their very rank and station, they were alien to the habits, and strangers to the feelings that made up the sturdy colonial character.

Lord Loudon * was an inefficient and improper officer to set at the head of an army anywhere. It is not pretended that he possessed any degree of courage, much less that he was gifted with that military genius which is certainly to be looked for in a commander who undertakes the responsibilities of such extended campaigns. Montcalm, the French General, had put him to his wits' end in achieving such few, but very significant successes as he had at Oswego, destroying and dismantling the fort at that place; and Loudon therefore resolved to stand only on the defensive. This was the whole secret of his no-policy of the summer previous, after his appointment by the ministry at home to supersede General Abercrombie. During the winter, however, he had made liberal drafts on the several Legislatures of the colonies, to which they responded with great promptness. Early in the year 1757, too, fresh and abundant forces arrived from

* See above, p. 40, note.

England; so that the belief was general that the campaign of this year was to be carried forward with signal energy and enthusiasm.

Had the matter lain with the colonies, the plans of the previous campaigns would certainly have been pushed on to completion and success. And the fortress from which the various assaults against the peace of the provincialists were fitted out, would have been assailed in turn with all imaginable vigor. In other words, the war would have been carried by the colonists into Canada. But not so thought Lord Loudon. With every means with which to secure a brilliant series of conclusive victories ready at his hand, he foolishly projected an excursion against the distant French fortress at Louisbourg, on the island of Cape Breton, at the mouth of the St. Lawrence, the rallying point for the French on this continent. Here he thought to strike a decisive blow which would bring him sudden fame for future enjoyment at home. In order to achieve this contemplated success, it was first necessary for him to concentrate his troops at Halifax. It was far into the summer when he reached that point, and then it was only to learn that a large fleet of French vessels had just before arrived at Louisbourg,* which was now abundantly able to protect the

* Louisbourg was in the island of Cape Breton, at the

fortification there from assault. So Loudon gave over his purpose altogether. He did not even make an effort to secure the victory of which he was, only a little time before, so sanguine and certain. He left his ships to watch the further movements of the French, and hastened back himself to New York. And thus nothing was accomplished by him during that year.

But Montcalm understood the situation of affairs exactly. He knew that Louisbourg could now take care of itself, and he also knew that the provincial and English force on the Canada lines must be much weakened by this ill-timed movement of Loudon. So he resolved to improve the advantage offered by these circumstances, and to push down Lake George and take possession of Fort William Henry. It was a bold undertaking, and yet it appeared a very feasible one. This fort was but a poor affair at best. It stood on a piece of ground gently rising from the shore of the lake, and had for a garrison about three thousand men. At Fort Edward, which was the lower fort, Gen. Webb commanded; and the force under him was even larger than that at Fort William

eastern extremity of Nova Scotia. Its importance lay in the fact that it was the harbor for the French privateers and other vessels of war, which issued from thence for sudden and destructive attacks upon English shipping and immediately returned to perfect safety.

Henry. Montcalm had an army of nine thousand men, including both French and Indians. During the month of March previous, he had ventured upon an attempt to take Fort William Henry; but it proved unsuccessful. He landed near that fortification on St. Patrick's eve; and a large portion of the British Rangers being Irishmen, he had not miscalculated in supposing that, inasmuch as they would probably celebrate that well-known festival, they would become more or less intoxicated; and of this circumstance he intended to take advantage. Lieut. Stark happened to be in command at the Fort at that time, and accidentally overheard some of the Rangers planning on the evening previous for their celebration of the next day. As an excuse for not furnishing them with liquor, he feigned lameness in his wrist, which prevented him from writing; so that when the army sutler was applied to for the liquor, he replied that he had received orders not to deal out any without a written order. Stark's lame hand was excuse enough for his not writing such orders, and of course no spirits were dealt out to the Rangers at all. The regular troops who celebrated the occasion were affected with the liquor they drank, and when the attack was made,—as it was, on St. Patrick's day,—the successful defence of the Fort was made entirely by the sober Rangers.

Montcalm had collected his forces, as just mentioned, to the amount of nine thousand men, French and Indians. It was in the latter part of July already. General Webb had just proceeded to Fort William Henry, with an escort of two hundred men, taking their commander, Major Putnam, along with him. While he remained at the Fort, he thought proper to send Putnam down the lake with a small force of but eighteen men, to discover where the enemy were, and in what numbers. They found the islands at the entrance of North-west Bay alive with them. Leaving two out of the five boats behind, that they might appear, if detected, to be innocently engaged in fishing, Putnam hurried back with all possible despatch to inform Gen. Webb of his astounding discovery. He of course then proposed to return to the rescue of his comrades, whom he had left behind; but Webb peremptorily refused him permission. By pleading and begging, however, he was allowed to return, and all the boats at last found their way back in safety, although they were hotly pursued, and at one time nearly surrounded by the enemy.

What does this cowardly general then do, but compel Putnam to pledge his eighteen men, by a solemn oath, to keep their knowledge of the enemy's approach a secret from the garrison at Fort William Henry,

and then order him to escort him with his command back to Fort Edward. Putnam protested, even to a greater extent than most young officers would dare to protest against the orders of their superiors; but it was all in vain.* Webb was escorted back in safety to his distant quarters at Fort Edward, cruelly leaving the garrison at Fort William Henry ignorant of their danger. But the next day he had thought enough better of it to send back Colonel Monroe, with his regiment, ordering him to assume the entire command.

When Montcalm therefore made his appearance before the fort, he had three men to the garrison's one. First he sent to Col. Monroe a summons to surrender the place, and humanely urged as a reason the enormous bloodshed and cruel destruction of life that would thus be averted. But as the latter had good reasons to continually expect reinforcements from General Webb at Fort Edward below, he refused to consider such a demand at all. From that time the siege regularly commenced, and continued for six days. Word was sent to Webb by expresses

* Putnam, in his eagerness, had the audacity to say to his superior officer: "I hope your Excellency does not intend to neglect so fair an opportunity of giving battle, should the enemy presume to land?" The only reply vouchsafed by the imperious Webb was the scornful query: "What do you think we should do here?"

during this time, laying before him their precarious situation, and imploring immediate succor; but it was a supplication to ears that were deaf. The man was either an arrant coward or else grossly infatuated. He did seem to relent, however, after a time, and changed his purpose so far as to send up Gen. Johnson, together with Major Putnam and his Rangers; but they had gone on but about three miles when he despatched an order after them, calling them back immediately. By the same messenger who was the bearer of this cowardly order, he sent a letter to Colonel Monroe, at Fort William Henry, informing him that he could render him no assistance, and advising him to surrender at once. The messenger was intercepted, and Montcalm got possession of the letter and instantly knew how the case stood. He had just before heard from his Indian scouts that the force that was marching up under Johnson and Putnam, were, in the language of the red men, as great in numbers as the leaves on the trees; and he had made up his mind to beat a retreat as early as he could in consequence. But this intercepted letter put a new face on the matter. He sent it in to Col. Monroe at once, therefore, with a new and more urgent demand for him to surrender.

No other way, of course, was left him. The siege had already nearly consumed their provisions, while

their ammunition was almost entirely exhausted. Articles of stipulation were drawn up between the two commanders, and Montcalm promised that the provincial army should be protected on their march down to Fort Edward by an escort of French troops. They were to march out with their arms and their baggage. They should not again serve against the French for eighteen months; and the sick and wounded were to be cared for by Montcalm, until such time as they should sufficiently recover to be safely escorted to Fort Edward.

The moment the last lines of the army had passed the gates of the fort, the Indians, numbering some two thousand in all, set up their hideous war-cry, shrill and fearful in the ears of the terror-stricken provincials, and fell upon them with all the strength and fury of their long-pent passion. They were, no doubt, expecting a large amount of plunder from this expedition against Fort William Henry, and when they saw their enemy thus about to escape them, they were able no longer to control their savage indignation; neither could Montcalm hold them in check, as he had already hinted in his first summons to the garrison to surrender. The French were powerless to afford them the least protection, even if they made the attempt. Such an indiscriminate and merciless massacre as on that bloody day was enacted on the

borders of beautiful Lake George, is scarcely matched, certainly not exceeded, by any similar transaction recorded in history. Those who fled were pursued by the savages for more than half the way to Fort Edward, who filled the forest with the wild echoes of their hideous war-whoop. Fifteen hundred of this devoted little army were butchered on the spot where protection had been solemnly promised them. The remnant, which did not finally reach Fort Edward, were dragged away into captivity, to suffer and at last to die. The defile through which they retreated from the fort, is called Bloody Defile to this day. Only a few years ago, on making excavations for a plank road there, a large number of human skeletons were thrown up to the surface. Several skulls had long fractures in them, as if made by tomahawks.

Webb was greatly alarmed on hearing what had been done, as well he might be. He therefore sent forward Major Putnam, with his command, to reconnoitre, and report if the enemy were about to march down next upon Fort Edward. And there is little doubt that, in case they had done so, he would have fled from the place with cowardly precipitancy, leaving such of his men as would not accompany him to take the best care they could of themselves. Putnam reached the fort only to find it a mass of ruins.

The French, having finished their diabolical work, were just getting into their boats to return up the lake. Putnam describes the scene that met his gaze, as he came up, in the following words: "The fort was entirely demolished; the barracks, out-houses, and buildings, were a heap of ruins; the cannon, stores, boats, and vessels were all carried away. The fires were still burning; the smoke and stench offensive and suffocating. Innumerable fragments, human skulls and bones, and carcasses half consumed, were still frying and broiling in the decaying fires. Dead bodies, mangled with knives and tomahawks, in all the wantonness of Indian fierceness and barbarity, were everywhere to be seen. More than one hundred women, butchered and shockingly mangled, lay upon the ground, still weltering in their gore. Devastation, barbarity, and horror everywhere appeared, and the spectacle presented was too diabolical and awful either to be endured or described."

Fort William Henry was never rebuilt. Fort George was built upon a point about a mile to the south-east of it, at which the English army rendezvoused the next year, just before their brilliant, but most unfortunate expedition against the French on Lake Champlain.

Later the same year, General Lyman, the old commander under whom Putnam first served in this war,

was in authority at Fort Edward, and began to make his position as secure and strong as circumstances would allow. One day he despatched a party of more than a hundred men into the forest to cut timber, and a guard of fifty regular troops was sent out to protect them against any sudden surprises. There was a narrow road leading to the fort, at the extremity of which the soldiers were posted. One side of this road was bounded by a morass, and the other by a creek. Early one morning, before the sun, in fact, was fairly up in the east, one of the sentinels thought he saw a flock of birds flying over; and, on looking carefully, he discovered that one of these feathered creatures lodged in the top of a tree above his head, and took the form of an Indian arrow. He gave the alarm, and it was found that a party of savages had crept into the morass during the night, who, as soon as the alarm was sounded, rushed out from their hiding place and murdered those of the laborers who were nearest at hand, driving the rest into the fort, which was some hundred rods off. The regulars came to the rescue in an instant, and drove back the Indians by a volley of musketry, so that the rest of the laborers were at last enabled to reach the fort in safety.

Gen. Lyman is supposed to have misinterpreted the state of things, having been so thoroughly sur-

prised, and therefore called in all his outposts and shut the gates of the fort. He supposed that a general attack against the fort from all points was intended, and felt the stern necessity upon him, for the moment, of leaving the little company of fifty regulars under Capt. Little to take care of themselves. It was a cruel mistake, though Gen. Lyman was never charged with cowardice in making it. Putnam happened to be placed on guard at the time, with a body of rangers at one of the outposts, which was on a small island situated not far from the fort. The moment he heard the sound of the firing in the direction of Capt. Little's company, he sprang with his usual impulsiveness into the water, and bade his men follow him. As it was necessary for him to pass the fort on his way, Gen. Lyman leaped to the parapet as he came on, and ordered him to stop where he was. He said it was needless to risk the lives of any more men; for he certainly supposed that the entire army of French and Indians were right upon them. Putnam, however, declared that he could not suffer a fellow-officer to be sacrificed without even an effort to save him; and, after offering a brief and very hasty excuse for his conduct, pushed forward with the hot haste that was so characteristic of his nature. He thought of nothing, and cared for nothing, but to rescue his brave companions.

They reached the company of regulars who were thus fighting for their lives, and rallied around them in an instant. Putnam was for going pell-mell into the swamp; and in they went, raising a shout, as they did so, loud enough to have frightened the very beasts of the forest. The Indians were not expecting to be received in quite this style, entertaining no such ideas of the courage of their enemy; they therefore took to flight with great precipitancy, and were hotly pursued during the rest of the day into the forest. Putnam returned to the fort with his men, expecting, of course, to be disgraced for his open disobedience of orders; but the general thought proper, under all the circumstances, to let the matter pass by in silence, and probably was glad of an excuse to get over it so easily. It would, without doubt, have created an intense excitement in the garrison, had Putnam received even a reprimand for his brave and self-sacrificing conduct on so trying an occasion.

Putnam remained at Fort Edward during that winter. In the course of the winter, too, another opportunity offered for him to make a display of that cool courage and bold daring, for which he enjoyed so wide a fame among the soldiers. The barracks caught fire at a point not more than twelve feet distant from the powder magazine, in which were stored about fifteen tons of powder. Cannon were brought

to bear upon them, in the hope of battering down a portion of them, and thus staying the progress of the fire. But it was in vain. Putnam saw the extreme danger, and, knowing that the flames were rapidly advancing in the direction of the magazine, determined to make every exertion possible to check them. For this purpose, he stood upon a ladder reaching to the roof, and took the buckets of water as they were passed up to him from the line of men that was formed between the fort and the river, and himself kept dashing it without intermission upon the flames. The heat grew every moment more and more intense, till he thought at times he could endure it no longer. The fire gained on him in spite of his efforts, and he found himself enshrouded in a rolling mass of smoke and flame. One pair of thick woollen mittens was burned off his hands, and he immediately called for another; these he kept continually dipping in the water, to preserve them from the fate of the other pair.

He was even directed to come down, as it was worse than useless to expose himself in this way any longer; but he resolutely refused, fighting the furious enemy with a desperate energy that excited general wonder and admiration. Still all the while he appeared as cool and collected as if there was no such danger as fifteen tons of powder contained, within a mile of

him. Some of the men, in the meantime, stricken with a panic, were proceeding to get their few valuables out of the fort and make ready for the expected explosion.

Up to this time, only a single angle of the barracks was on fire; but now the flames enwrapped the entire line, and were bent on getting at the powder beyond. Putnam was then obliged to leave his post on the ladder, and came down and planted himself, as the last resource, between the burning barracks and the magazine, and called for more water. They kept passing it to him in a steady stream of buckets. The fire had now caught the outside timbers of the magazine, and burned them completely off. Only a single thickness remained between that and the powder, and that was soon reduced to a living coal! Some thought of flight; but Putnam worked on. While his sturdy form stood confronting the fires, it acted upon those who saw him like a magnet, to attract them to the spot. So they all worked with greater enthusiasm still. Putnam was covered with the thick-falling cinders, and enshrouded with the smoke. Every one expected to see him give out before so relentless a foe as the one he had undertaken to contend with. This was a rarer display of true courage than when he went down alone into the wolf's den at midnight, finding his way along with a flick-

ering torch. He poured on the water incessantly. At last the main timbers of the barracks having burned through, they fell in, and the danger was over. For nearly two hours he had fought the fire single-handed. He was blistered from head to foot, from his exposure to the intense heat; and on drawing his second pair of mittens from his hands, the skin came with them too.

He was a keen sufferer from the effects of these blisters and burns, and it was many weeks before he was able to feel that his case had taken a favorable turn. But by this single act he had earned for himself the warmest admiration and the hearty gratitude of the garrison, and indeed of the entire army. No one could justly estimate what he alone had saved, by thus subduing such a remorseless enemy as for a time threatened to overwhelm them all with instant destruction.

CHAPTER IV.

CAMPAIGN OF 1758.

WILLIAM PITT, afterwards Lord Chatham, had been entrusted with the administration of affairs by the British government during the previous year, the King finding the people at home and his colonies in America were growing exceedingly restive under the accumulating disasters and mortifications of the war. Thus far, nothing seemed to have come of all their efforts and sacrifices. The three or four northern colonies that had heretofore been so lavish of their men and money in the prosecution of the war,—a war, too, which was to bring no immediate advantage to themselves,—felt that it was a drain upon them to go on in this way, for which there was no likelihood that they would ever receive a proper compensation. Had the army achieved any signal successes, it would have been a different thing; but the idea of continuing as they had been doing for the past two and three campaigns, caused no little irritation and disquiet among them. They had raised fifteen thousand men to carry on this war; and they hesitated

about raising any more with so little promise of success.

As soon, however, as it was understood that the king had changed his ministry, their hopes changed too, and they looked forward to a chance now of retrieving their past losses, and securing that honorable peace for which they had been fighting.

Mr. Pitt saw at once, with his instinctive comprehensiveness of mind, that the arms of the English had failed of success hitherto, on account of the lack of capacity and courage on the part of the leaders. He therefore resolved to recall the inefficient Lord Loudon; and ordered Abercrombie * to resume the command, in which the former had, only the year before superseded him. General Abercrombie made his head quarters at Fort Edward. He had been there but a little while, when he gave directions to Major Putnam to take sixty men with him down towards South Bay, beyond the place where Wood Creek emp-

* James Abercrombie (1706-1781), born of a wealthy Scotch family, was bred as a soldier and rose to the office of colonel in the British army. In June, 1756, he was sent to this country and commanded the British forces until the arrival of Loudon in August of that year. In 1758 he succeeded Loudon as commander-in-chief. He had no military ability. His blunder at Ticonderoga cost his country the lives of 2,000 brave men. In 1759 he was superseded by Amherst and returned to England. Elected to Parliament, he furthered those measures of harsh policy toward the colonies which resulted in the war of the Revolution.

ties into Lake Champlain, and there watch for such parties of the French as might come straggling along in their direction. This was business exactly suited to Putnam's mind, and he proceeded to obey so welcome an order with his usual alacrity. Arriving at a spot which he thought a most favorable one for entrenching his little party, he threw up a breast work of stone some thirty feet in length, and ingeniously concealed the whole with young pine trees which were chopped for the purpose. The creek at that point was only thirty yards in width; and the precipice on which he erected his fortification lifted itself some ten or fifteen feet straight above the water. The opposite bank was very steep, and fully twenty feet in height.

The party became short of provisions, after a time, although Putnam had already sent back fifteen men to Fort Edward, who were too unwell to stand the exposure any longer. He felt sorely the want to which they were getting reduced, and cast about to find some way of securing temporary supplies. Happening to see a large buck emerging from the thicket and making ready to plunge into the creek and swim to the other bank, he impulsively fired and brought the animal to the ground. At such a time, the firing of a gun was contrary to military rules, and the most hazardous experiment that could have been tried.

And it proved so in the present instance. Marin, the famous French partisan,—of whom we have spoken before,—chanced to be in the vicinity with a party of French and Indians, moving stealthily down towards the American forces. This warning, which Putnam's musket furnished him, also sufficed to show him where the provincial scouts were stationed; and the moment his sentinel, who had heard the report of the musket, brought in word to that effect, Marin resolved upon either surprising them where they were, or stealing past them unperceived into the country below.

The French and Indians glided on down the creek as silently as possible. They detected as yet no signs of an ambush, for the pine trees before the parapet which Putnam had erected served as a perfect screen. At about ten o'clock at night, one of the American sentinels brought in word that he saw a great many canoes, filled with men, advancing in the silence of the night in their direction, and that they would soon be within reach of the fort on the bank. Putnam called in the sentinels, and prepared to greet the enemy in his earnest manner, as soon as they should make their appearance. It was a perfectly still night, and a full moon flooded the landscape with its mellow light. All within the little parapet was hushed. There was not even the rustle of a bough, or the

crackle of a twig to be heard. The canoes came in sight. They were indeed packed with men, as the sentinel had warned them. Putnam resolved to allow the first part of the line of boats to get well into the throat of the watery defile, and then to open fire upon them and take all possible and destructive advantage of their confusion.

They had paddled their way into this treacherous snare, not a sound as yet breaking the stillness, when a soldier in the American party accidentally struck the lock of his musket against a stone. "O-WISH!" hissed the commander of the enemy, halting in his sudden fright, and repeating the Indian watch-word. The van of the line of boats having thus come to a stand, the rear crowded up rapidly, and in a moment they were all huddled together before the American breastworks. Putnam saw his advantage, and eagerly improved it. He at once ordered his men to fire. Instantly the entangled knot of canoes was thrown into still direr confusion. The French could not see their enemy, and of course could return but an ineffectual fire. On the other hand, almost every shot of the American party carried death along with it. They kept up their murderous work from the parapet with unabated energy, killing great numbers of the enemy in the boats, whose lifeless bodies went tumbling over the sides and plashing into the water. Marin at

length saw, with his quick eye, that, from the firing of the Americans, there could not be many of them, and accordingly sent off a detachment of his men to land below and attack the entrenched party from behind.

Putnam, however, was as quick as himself. He instantly ordered a detachment of a dozen men to go and prevent their landing, which order was successfully executed; and he sent still another party up the creek, to prevent a similar demonstration in that direction. There were thus left only twenty men with Putnam in the fort; and these kept loading and firing their pieces during the remainder of the night, making great havoc with the boats, but not even sacrificing a single life among their own number. It was discovered, when morning broke, that a part of the French had succeeded in making a landing below, between the Americans and Fort Edward, and nothing was left the latter but to retreat with all possible despatch. This last order of Putnam's was executed with signal success. Only two of the American scouting party were wounded during this action, while nearly three hundred of the enemy fell beneath the fire from behind the concealed battlements on the bank. These two were sent off, with two others, to the fort, but were afterwards overtaken by their pursuers, having been tracked by their blood on the ground.

They advised their escort to fly, which the latter did. One of them then killed three of the Indians, before they succeeded in despatching him, and the other was carried off a prisoner into Canada. Putnam afterwards saw him there, when himself a prisoner in the hands of the French.*

* It was about ten o'clock at night when a sentinel gave the news that a fleet of bark canoes, filled with men, was approaching. "The part of the lake which the enemy soon entered is narrow—only a few rods wide—and the shores on either side abrupt and rocky. . . . The night was clear and the full moon shone with unusual brightness. . . . Some of the enemy paddled by little suspicious of danger. . . . Putnam, who had commanded his men not to fire until he gave the signal by doing so himself, discharged his gun. A deadly volley followed from the breastworks, and the well-concerted attack threw the enemy into great confusion. . . . In the weird moonlight the tragic scene continued. Putnam and his men poured an incessant and destructive fire upon the enemy, who in return groaned, shrieked, yelled, and ineffectively shot towards the parapet. At dawn Putnam learned that some of the foe had landed below him and were hastening to cut off his retreat. Knowing that the force was superior to his own and that he could make but little resistance, since his soldiers had only a small supply of ammunition left, some of them having in fact shot their last round, he ordered his men to "swing their packs." They retired rapidly, in good order, and succeeded in advancing far enough up Wood Creek to avoid being surrounded, although they were obliged to leave behind them three of their number, who had been wounded in the long-continued action. Afterwards, when Putnam was in Canada, he learned that the French and Indians in the memorable moonlight encounter, numbered five hundred, commanded by the famous partisan [*i. e.*,

On his retreat to Fort Edward, having only forty men under him in all, Putnam was suddenly surprised to find himself fired upon by a party that was unexpectedly approaching in front. Ignorant of their numbers, he nevertheless determined to rush forward to the conflict, and at once fight his way through or run the chances for his life. Scarcely had he set up his loud shout for his men to follow their leader, when a cry arose from the other side,—“Hold, we are friends!” “Friends, or foes,” said Putnam, when they came up, “you deserve to be fired into for doing so little execution, when you had so fair a shot!” The party proved to be a detachment of men from the fort, who had been sent to cover the retreat of the little force under Putnam.

Gen. Abercrombie determined, not long after taking possession of his post at Fort Edward that year, to signalize the year's campaign by some brilliant undertaking. He could think of nothing which would bring him larger and more sudden fame than the capture of Fort Ticonderoga, and he therefore formed the resolution to compass such a plan before the season went by. It was a hazardous undertaking, as he well knew; the fortifications were of the most thor-

scout, or guerilla], Marin. No scouting party since the war began had suffered such a loss, for more than one half of those who went out never came back.”—Livingston.

ough and extensive character; the site was almost a perfect defence of itself; and it required all the strength and courage of a well appointed and highly disciplined army to march up to storm such a fortress, in the face of the thousand obstacles which the garrison had it in their power to throw in their way. But Abercrombie seemed to have set his heart on the undertaking. His imagination, it is easy to suppose, was dazzled with visions of the military glory which its capture would earn for his name.

It so chanced that the garrison within the fort at Ticonderoga was at one time this summer reduced to four thousand men; whereas Abercrombie had at his command fully sixteen thousand, nine thousand of whom were furnished by the Colonies. They assembled at Fort George, and set sail on the lake on the 5th day of July, in the gray of the morning. It was a Saturday. The array thus presented on the surface of that beautiful lake, formed a picture to which no descriptive pen could do the justice it deserves. There were one hundred and thirty-five whale boats, and nine hundred batteaux, all laden heavily with men and arms. In the sultry twilight of the same evening they debarked at a point on the lake called Sabbath Day Point, where they remained until midnight, refreshing themselves with rest after the long day's heat and fatigue.

Young Lord Howe was with the army, the idol and adored of all. He gathered around his table the many youthful and gallant spirits of the army, with whom he discoursed with great freedom and eloquence on the prospects of this most splendid expedition. Capt. Stark was present, who afterwards achieved a lasting renown as one of the Generals of the Revolution. Much was said about the situation of Ticonderoga, its defences, the means of approach to its fastnesses, and the probable termination of the attempt to reduce it by their arms. There were those present, who, on recalling many things which Howe uttered that night, thought they detected a gleam of that sadness of his to which they afterwards gave the name of presentiment.

This flotilla of more than a thousand boats on the bosom of the lake, presented a splendid military pageant. Howe, in a large boat, led the van, surrounded by a company of Rangers and boatmen. The English troops were displayed in the centre, and the Provincials formed the wings. It was a little after midnight when they re-embarked and began to move forward again. There was not a cloud to be seen in the sky; the stars shone out bright and sparkling; and the placid lake was unruffled by the breath of the lightest breeze. Their oars were muffled, and their progress was so silent that not a single one of the

sentinels on the surrounding hillsides observed them. It was day-dawn when they had come within four miles of the point at which they were to land. The sentinels of the French had no suspicion of the presence or even of the approach of the English army, until the blaze of their scarlet uniforms flashed in their eyes, as the crowded boats rounded the point of land that intervened. They landed at about noon in a little cove on the west side of the lake, Lord Howe leading on the vanguard of the army. The Rangers pushed forward through the forest, to clear the way for the main body. Howe came to the bridge that spanned the stream formed by the emptying of Lake George into Lake Champlain, at the point known as Lower Falls; and thence he hurried on for the distance of a mile and a quarter to the French lines.

The French first erected their fortifications at Ticonderoga in 1755. They found that site most happily adapted to the requirements of a fortress, it being peninsular in form, and elevated more than a hundred feet above the level of the lake. On three sides was water, while on the fourth was an almost impassable swamp, or morass. This latter was situated to the north. There was a neck, or narrow strip of land, between this swamp and the outlet of Lake George, upon which were built regular entrench-

ments, and afterwards a breastwork nine feet in height; and before this breastwork was an *abatis*,—which is formed of trees cut down and pointed with their sharp branches outward, rendering it extremely difficult for opposing troops to make their way over them in an attempt at storming.

As we before remarked, Montcalm had but four thousand men under his command in the fortress, and was at the time expecting a reinforcement of three thousand from Canada. Abercrombie knew this very well. The latter advanced his army in three columns, but they made but slow progress on account of the intricacy of the forest into which so large an army had been plunged.* An advance battalion of the French fled from the log breastwork they occupied, at their

* The fact is that Lord Abercrombie was lost in the woods. The English were very slow to learn the requirements of warfare on the frontier. It was this ignorance that cost Braddock his defeat and death on the way to Fort Duquesne. In the present instance, Abercrombie was trying to advance with mechanical precision and in regular columns, as if he were on a parade ground. No wonder he found it, as he explained, “a strange situation,” and added that “the woods being very thick, impassable with any regularity to such a body of men, and the guides unskilful, the troops were bewildered, and the columns broke, falling in one upon another.” It may be added that the detachment of French troops, with which the conflict began, was also lost; but there was an important difference. The French were on their own ground and quickly recovered themselves, while with the English matters grew worse and worse.

approach, which they fired as they fled. Lord Howe * was second in command. Putnam acted as an advance guard to thread the forest, and to perform the valuable service of a scout. He had a hundred brave men under him. Young Howe was eager to advance as fast as the scouts, and proposed to Major Putnam to accompany him; but to this the latter would not listen. He nobly said to him, in trying to dissuade him from his purpose, "My Lord, if I am killed, the loss of my life will be of little consequence; but the safety of yours is of infinite importance to this army." "Your life," instantly answered Howe, "is as dear to you as mine is to me! I am determined to go!" And he did go. It was not long before they came up with the advance guard of the enemy, the same which had a little while before fled and burned the log breastworks. This body was without a guide, it seems, and had become bewildered in trying to find their way back to the French lines. At once

* Lord Howe was a born leader and was universally popular throughout the army. He did not superciliously hold himself aloof from the volunteers, as is too often the custom of regularly educated military men. He was companionable with all down to the humblest, though he was a lord. He was not only personally brave, but he had the priceless quality of infusing courage and enthusiasm into the whole body of the troops. He was just such a soldier as to be an ideal and even idol to Putnam. He manifested special interest in the rangers, a fact that was fully appreciated by the latter. His death was a loss to the army that can never be computed.

fighting began between the parties, and Lord Howe fell at the very first fire! The French, however, were driven back, having lost in killed and prisoners four hundred and fifty men. The English were greatly confused, their lines broken, and at the end of the engagement Abercrombie withdrew with them again to the landing place on Lake George, to obtain rest and refreshment.

It was said that when young Lord Howe fell, "the soul of the army seemed to expire." The soldiers all adored him. He accommodated himself to all the circumstances of his situation, and cut his hair and shaped his garments to suit the requirements of the service and the fashion of the Provincial army. Five thousand troops came over with him to Halifax from England, the year before, whom he commanded in this expedition against Ticonderoga. When he met his melancholy end, he was not yet thirty-four years old. The General Court of Massachusetts appropriated two hundred and fifty pounds, or about twelve hundred and fifty dollars, to secure the erection of a monument to his memory in Westminster Abbey. His remains were carried to Albany, where they were buried with suitable honors. His coffin was opened many years afterwards, and it was found that his hair had grown out in long and beautiful locks.

Gen. Abercrombie next despatched a party to make observations concerning the defences of the enemy; and an engineer who went with them brought back word that the works might easily be carried, as they were not yet finished. Upon this the English army marched forward once more. The French opened a galling fire of artillery upon them from behind their breastworks, as they advanced, but they seemed to take no heed of it whatever. On they rushed in the face of the enemy's fire, resolved to carry the works by storm. The *abatis* presented the most fearful obstacle to them, but they cared nothing for that. They recklessly dashed on, clambering over and hewing their way through the jagged limbs of the trees, for the incredible space of four long hours. A few did succeed in finally reaching the parapet,—but they fell back in death the instant they mounted it. The English army was mown down in the most cruel and murderous manner, while it was unable to do any execution in return.* Abercrombie at length saw the futility of the attempt to storm the works, and withdrew his forces hastily. The French did not pursue, or the loss must have been much greater even than it

* Parkman has given a vivid account of this bloody event:—"The scene was frightful, masses of infuriated men who could not go forward, and would not go back; straining for an enemy they could not reach, and firing on an enemy they could not see; caught in the entanglement

was. They retreated * in safety to the point on Lake George at which they first landed, whence the wounded were sent under escorts to Albany and Fort Edward.

In this most rash and inconsiderate expedition the English army lost two thousand men, and twenty-five hundred stand of arms. They rushed like brave and dauntless heroes into the very jaws of death, but it was the height of a cruel ignorance thus to sacrifice the flower of an army for no purpose at all. Had Abercrombie ordered a general assault on the morning after the bloody skirmish with the advanced guard, he might have carried the then incomplete intrenchments; but he delayed until the next day, and by that time the French had constructed a bristling *abatis* along their entire lines, which prevented the approach of artillery, or even of infantry.

Putnam displayed great courage at all times dur-

of fallen trees; tripped by briers, stumbling over logs, tearing through boughs; shouting, yelling, cursing, and pelted all the while with bullets that killed them by scores, stretched them on the ground, or hung them on jagged branches in strange attitudes of death. The provincials supported the regulars with spirit, and some of them forced their way to the foot of the wooden wall." The English did not lack bravery even to the point of desperation. During the afternoon they made no less than three assaults, and every one of them was hopeless.

* The English retreat was covered by Putnam and his rangers, who did not leave the field until nearly dark.

ing the several engagements; and in the final retreat, acting as Aid, in place of the lamented Howe, to General Abercrombie, he performed most efficient and gallant service. Gen. Abercrombie immediately returned to Fort Edward, having accomplished none of the objects for which this most costly and inglorious military enterprise had been undertaken. His inefficiency as a commander was established in the eyes of every man in the army.

It was during this summer that Putnam performed his daring feat of dashing down the mad rapids of the Hudson in an open boat. He was near Fort Miller at the time, which was situated on the east bank of the Hudson. Learning suddenly that a party of Indians were in the woods behind him, he bethought himself of what he should do. If he tried to cross the river at that point, the savages would certainly shoot him before he could get over; if he stayed where he was, his doom was sealed without any doubt; and if he trusted himself in his light skiff to the boiling rapids, he could hardly expect less than an awful death on the rocks below. But, as usual with him, his resolution was quickly taken. He sprang into the boat, hastily ordered the oarsmen to push off into the stream, and succeeded in getting beyond the reach of the guns of the Indians by the time they came in sight upon the shore.

But he had escaped one danger only to plunge into the jaws of another. In a few moments they were within the whirl and roar of the rapids. The rocks, jagged and sharp, thrust themselves out of the water on this side and that. The over-laden boat was lifted up and thrown down again by the mad force of the breakers. Putnam, however, stood like a statue at the helm, skilfully guiding her through the roaring dangers, while the savages, struck dumb with astonishment at what they saw, only looked on in silence, exchanging not even a sign with one another. The boat went safely through the foaming waters, and escaped all the perils that thrust themselves in her rapid way; and in a few seconds shot like a silver arrow out into the placid bay below. The Indians, from this, thought Putnam safe from all danger, and superstitiously believed it would be useless to fire upon him, for his life was "charmed."

In August, not long after the unfortunate march to Ticonderoga, Putnam was sent, with Major Rogers, to overtake a party of the enemy that had made a sudden attack on one of their baggage trains, and carried off a large quantity of valuable stores. They pushed forward with all possible haste to South Bay, a part of Lake Champlain, and reached the spot just in time to see the fugitives embarking in their boats. Putnam concluded it was best to remain in the lo-

cality, and watch the enemy's future movements. Rogers was posted at South Bay, while Putnam took his position at Wood Creek, which empties into Lake Champlain, and about a dozen miles distant. Marin was soon in the vicinity again, the foraging party having probably carried word to the army above, that the Americans were in pursuit; and as his scouts were known to the Americans to be hanging on their outposts, it was thought most prudent for Rogers to unite his force with Putnam's at Wood Creek, and for them all to march back to Fort Edward as soon as they could. This they proceeded to do with all proper despatch.

As they were advancing through the dense thickets, so dense that they were obliged to thread their way in Indian file, Rogers amused himself one morning before the hour for marching had come, with firing at a mark with a British officer.* It was of course the most reckless mistake that could have been made. Marin's party of Indians was near enough to hear the report, and the wary enemy pushed around until he came to an ambuscade through which the retreating provincials would have to pass. There he intended to take his bloody advantage.

The American troops, numbering about five hun-

* This was one Lieutenant Irwin. They were shooting on a wager.

dred, were in three divisions; the first was led on by Major Putnam; Capt. Dalzell commanded the second; and the third was under Major Rogers. No sooner had the van emerged from the dense thicket through which they had been creeping, upon the comparatively open plain, than the savages fell upon them with surprising fury. They had been skilfully posted all along the way, and from their coverts behind the tree-trunks made sure of a man for every fire. Rogers behaved in a manner that was at the time thought cowardly; but Putnam pressed on with heated resolution, and ordered Dalzell to hasten forward with his division to his relief.

In a short time the fight became a desperate one. Now it was hand to hand, and now they fired at one another from behind the protection of the forest trees. First this side seemed to prevail, and then that. A gigantic savage * approached Putnam to take his life. The latter snapped his fusee, having it pressed close against the Indian's breast. It missed fire, and the savage sprang upon him with all his native ferocity, and instantly made him a prisoner. He took him and tied him securely to a tree which was close at hand, and then resumed his hot work in the battle.

The conflict went on with redoubled rage, Capt. Dalzell took the command, and pressed hard upon

* His name was Caughnawaga.

the foe at one time, when they would recover from their disadvantage and dash against the provincials with increased fury and madness in turn. Putnam was bound to the tree all the while, and, as the battle went on, he was several times placed almost in the centre of the fire between the two parties! His clothes were pierced with bullets, but he was himself providentially unhurt. When once the provincials were driven far back, and he found himself surrounded by the enemy, two or three young savages amused themselves by hurling their tomahawks at the tree, so as just to graze his head. Finally a cruel Frenchman presented his gun to Putnam's breast, intending to despatch him at once; but finding it would not go off, he clubbed it and dealt him a blow upon his cheek, and left him, supposing that he had made an end of him.*

* This story was first narrated by Humphreys, who received the facts direct from Putnam, and from whose account all subsequent narratives of the event have been derived. The description of Humphreys is exceedingly vivid, and is in part as follows:—"The balls flew incessantly from either side, many struck the tree, while some passed through the sleeves and skirts of his coat. In this state of jeopardy, unable to move his body, or to stir his limbs, or even to incline his head, he remained more than an hour, so equally balanced, and so obstinate was the fight! At one moment, while the battle swerved in favor of the enemy, a young savage chose an odd way of discovering his humor. He found Putnam bound, he might have

The enemy were at last driven back by the provincials, but in their hasty retreat they were careful to unbind their prisoner and carry him along with them. He was weary and faint, weak from the abuses that had been visited upon him, and almost broken-hearted at the thought of being led off through the wilderness into captivity. The Indians who had charge of him, tied his wrists tightly with cords, so that they were badly swollen and pained him exceedingly. They even strapped heavy burdens upon

despatched him at a blow. But he loved better to excite the terrors of the prisoner, by hurling a tomahawk at his head, or rather that it should seem that his object was to see how near he could throw it without touching him—the weapon struck in the tree a number of times at a hair's-breadth distance from the mark. When the Indian had finished his amusement, a French *bas-officer* (a much more inveterate savage by nature, though descended from so humane and polished a nation) perceiving Putnam, came up to him, and, leveling a *fuzee* within a foot of his breast, attempted to discharge it—it missed fire. Ineffectually did the intended victim solicit the treatment due to his situation by repeating that he was a prisoner of war. The degenerate Frenchman did not understand the language of honor or of nature; deaf to their voice, and dead to sensibility, he violently, and repeatedly, pushed the muzzle of his gun against Putnam's ribs, and finally gave him a cruel blow on the jaw with the butt-end of his piece. After this dastardly deed he left him."

Putnam was later struck on the cheek by the tomahawk of an Indian, and the scar of this wound he carried to his grave.

his back besides. He begged them to kill him outright, and put him out of his suffering at once. They compelled him to walk over a rough and hard country, with nothing at all on his feet, and this of course increased the pain he endured indescribably. But after a time his savage captor came up, and gave him a pair of moccasins for his feet, besides removing the cruel burden from his shoulders.*

Had this chief continued with him on the journey, it would have been better for the unfortunate prisoner. But as he was compelled to go back to look

* That Caughnawaga spared no pains to guard his prisoner safely, may be inferred from the following account of the manner in which he prepared Putnam for his night's rest:—"He took the moccasins from his feet and tied them to one of his wrists; then directing him to lie down on his back upon the bare ground, he stretched one arm to its full length, and bound it fast to a young tree; the other arm was extended and bound in the same manner—his legs were stretched apart and fastened to two saplings. Then a number of tall but slender poles were cut down, which, with some long bushes, were laid across his body from head to foot; on each side lay as many Indians as could conveniently find lodging, in order to prevent the possibility of his escape. In this disagreeable and painful posture he remained until morning. During the night, the longest and most dreary conceivable, our hero used to relate that he felt a ray of cheerfulness come casually across his mind, and could not even refrain from smiling when he reflected on this ludicrous group for a painter, of which he himself was the principal figure."

after the wounded, some two hundred Indians went on with their captive, and soon came into what seemed the very heart of the wilderness. Here they stopped, and held a consultation. It was resolved at length to take their prisoner and roast him to death by a slow fire! Such fiendish torture was exactly suited to their savage instincts. Accordingly they stripped him of his clothes, bound him to a tree, and piled faggots and brushwood in a circle around him. He looked on in courageous silence, and prepared his thoughts for the end that seemed near at hand. His tormentors began to yell and dance around him. The fire was kindled, and the flames began slowly to creep up towards him. The savages screamed in wild delight. The fire grew hotter and hotter, and the suffering victim, writhing and twisting, turned himself from side to side. The first time the fire was kindled, a sudden fall of rain quenched it; but after the second trial, it burnt with great rapidity. The more he writhed in his speechless agony, the louder the savages yelled in their wild delight, and the more frantic became their motions in their barbaric dances. He fixed his thoughts on the loved ones at home, and made ready to die whenever the last moment should come.

Suddenly a French officer came dashing up through

the crowd, kicked away the burning faggots and branches, cut the thongs by which he was tied to the tree, and released him. It was Marin himself. He had heard of these inhuman barbarities of the Indians towards their distinguished captive, and hastened on to save him from the fate which he knew awaited him. Had he come a few minutes later, it would probably have been all over. He passionately upbraided the Indians for their cruelty, and took the prisoner under his own charge for the rest of the journey.

Putnam suffered excessively all the way to Ticonderoga, although he was treated with kindness and courtesy. When he reached that fortress, he was presented a prisoner to the Marquis Montcalm, the French commander, by whom he was soon after sent under a proper escort to Montreal. Col. Peter Schuyler was a prisoner there, with others at the time, and he paid Putnam great attention and civility. It was through his influence that he was finally exchanged for a French prisoner, captured by Col. Bradstreet at the assault on Frontenac, now Kingston, in upper Canada. In Montreal, too, Major Putnam became acquainted with the lovely prisoner, Mrs. Howe, whom he escorted back in safety to her friends in New England. His final release was hailed with joy by his numerous friends throughout

the combined English and provincial army. They had never expected to see him alive again.*

* Upon Putnam's return from captivity he heard for the first time the news of the death of his son Daniel, at the age of seventeen. This death had occurred August 8, 1758, the very day the Indians were dancing around the fire by which they were roasting the father alive.

Putnam's exchange was effected by the finesse of his friend, Colonel Schuyler, who was appointed by Abercrombie to negotiate the details of the exchange. To Vaudreuil, the French commissioner, he said with apparent indifference: "There is an old man here [Putnam was just forty years of age] who is a Provincial Major, and wishes to be at home with his wife and children; he can do no good here or anywhere else; I believe your Excellency had better keep some of the young men, who have no wife or children to care for, and let the old fellow go home with me."

CHAPTER V.

END OF THE FRENCH WAR.

THE campaign of 1759 opened new prospects to the English arms on this continent. Then for the first time the ministry saw that they had a chance to make up for their past reverses, and it gave them hope and courage accordingly.

During this year, Major Putnam was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel; a rank which no one will dispute he had richly earned with his patriotic and self-denying services. The ministry recalled Abercrombie, on account of his manifest inefficiency, and placed in his stead, General Amherst, a man in every respect his superior, and well worthy of the high confidence that was reposed in him.

During this year General Wolfe fell on the Plains of Abraham, before Quebec, in the midst of victory. It was a brilliant victory gained, but it cost the army and England dearly. Wolfe was a commander who could be ill spared from any army. In one sense, he threw his life away in carrying forward this daring assault upon Quebec, since he felt that the ministry

were already dissatisfied with one shortcoming of which he was guilty, and he now wished to prove to them that they had not placed their confidence in him to no purpose.*

Ticonderoga and Crown Point † likewise fell before the approach of Gen. Amherst, who had but to make his appearance before those most important posts, in order to insure their ready surrender and evacuation. The commander at Ticonderoga saw

* James Wolfe (1726-1759), served in the English army in Germany during several years of the Seven Years' War. Being transferred to America he was prominent in the capture of Fort Louisbourg. His crowning feat was the capture of Quebec, one of the most romantic incidents in the history of warfare. At the taking of Quebec, both he and the French commander, the Marquis of Montcalm, were mortally wounded.

† General Amherst, taught by the disaster that befell his predecessor, Abercrombie, approached Ticonderoga with the greatest caution. Having disembarked his forces in the neighborhood, he prudently constructed intrenchments and awaited the arrival of his cannon. The French commandant, accounting prudence the better part of valor, evacuated the fort, having first ignited a fuse that was to explode the magazine. The explosion occurred just before midnight, July 26, 1759. Only one bastion was destroyed and the main part of the fort was uninjured. Amherst's men soon entered and fought the fire that was destroying the barracks, and quickly repaired the damage done to the fort. Crown Point was likewise abandoned by the French within a few days. The fortifications at this place had so fallen into decay that Amherst began the construction of a new fort instead of repairing the old one. The French retreated to Fort Isle aux Noix in the Sorel.

very soon that he had some one else than Abercrombie, of the year before, to deal with, and capitulated without offering to strike a blow.

Putnam accompanied Amherst in his expedition during this year both to Ticonderoga and Crown Point; and his services were not a whit behind what they had been heretofore for promptness and general value. He had as much to do, personally, as any other individual, in strengthening the works about Crown Point; and superintended them with his customary vigilance and skill.

In 1760 the English ministry sent word over that they wished Amherst to strike one vigorous and final blow, and so reduce the Canadas altogether. Amherst therefore projected his famous expedition against Montreal, which was now the only other important post to which attention remained to be directed. He divided the army into three parts; one started for Quebec, under Gen. Murray, who was at the head of the force before commanded by the lamented Wolfe; a second moved forward from Crown Point, by way of Isle-Aux-Noix, under the command of Col. Haviland; and the third was put in motion by Gen. Amherst himself, who passed up the Mohawk Valley, and thence to Oswego, at which place a force of a thousand Indians, under Sir William Johnson, was added, making some eleven thousand in all.

Lieut. Col. Putnam went with the Commander-in-Chief.

The plan was, to have all their forces arrive before Montreal upon the same day, if possible. Amherst embarked on Lake Ontario, captured a fort on his way, and happened to arrive before Montreal on the very same day on which Gen. Murray reached that point from Quebec. It was a happy coincidence. What was still more fortunate, Col. Haviland came up with his Crown Point troops on the very next day! The concerted design so far certainly worked admirably.

The Marquis de Vaudreuil was in command at Montreal, and he had prepared himself to withstand, as he thought, any assault that might be made upon the city. But as soon as he saw the vastly superior army that had suddenly made its appearance against him, and from three different quarters at the same time, he determined to offer terms of capitulation. They were accepted without any delay, or any bloodshed, and Montreal became the possession of the English. From that day, of course, the Canadas passed into other hands. It was the crowning act of all the rest. After so many trials and reverses, it had resulted gloriously for the English arms at the last.

It was while Lieut. Col. Putnam was passing up with Gen. Amherst to the attack on Montreal, that

he performed the feat that is recorded of him at the fort on Isle Royal. It was necessary for Amherst to capture this fort, since it would not be safe to leave such a fortress in the hands of the enemy behind him. The fort was named Oswegatchie, and was built on the island at the entrance of the river of the same name. Two armed vessels faithfully guarded the entrance, and likewise swept the whole stream. Unless these were put out of the way, Amherst could not hope to proceed.

While the General was pondering on the way in which he could get out of his dilemma, Putnam proposed to go and take the vessels himself. "How?" asked his surprised commander. "With a beetle and wedges," answered the courageous Putnam. The General knew what a character Putnam had proved himself to be before, and gave him authority to go ahead, though he did not believe that anything would come of it. Putnam took a few men with him in a boat, and after nightfall started off in the silence and darkness. Getting under the vessels' sterns unperceived, he drove the wedges in on each side of their rudders, and thus prevented their obeying the will of any pilot on deck. Both the vessels were driven ashore by the wind, being helpless in the hands of their commanders, and struck at once to the summons of the English officers, who were ready to meet them

as soon as their crews landed. This incident has been very strongly denied by many, yet there is enough foundation for it in fact to make it worth telling.*

In the year 1762, England found herself considerably shorn of her strength, and coalitions between some of the other nations of the continent were apparently forming against her. Spain was quite ready to co-operate with France in her endeavor to regain what she had thus far lost in America. The colonies were required to furnish still more men in order to meet this new movement. In February, 1762, the French island, Martinique, one of the West Indies, was captured by the British. The Caribbees, too, were all taken by the same power. And finally a large naval force, consisting of nearly forty vessels,

* This story is accepted as true by so careful a historian as John Fiske. The running of the various rapids of the St. Lawrence river was an exciting and costly experience. Forty-six boats were totally wrecked, and eighteen badly damaged, and eighty-four men were drowned. Near Montreal, at the seat of an Indian mission, Putnam found the Indian Caughnawaga, who had captured him two years before. Of the meeting between the erstwhile enemies, Humphreys writes: "That Indian was highly delighted to see his old acquaintance, whom he entertained in his well built stone house with great friendship and hospitality; while his guest did not discover less satisfaction in an opportunity of shaking the brave savage by the hand and proffering him protection in this reverse of his military fortunes."

and counting ten thousand men, were sent against Havana. They succeeded in landing upon the island of Cuba, but could not make any headway. A pestilence broke out among the troops, to whom the tropical climate was entirely unsuited, and in less than two months more than half of their number were swept off.

Reinforcements, however, came along in good time from the colonies, consisting of over two thousand men in all, of whom Connecticut alone furnished one thousand under command of Gen. Lyman.* He having afterwards been appointed commander of the entire Provincial force, Lieut. Col. Putnam accordingly took command of the Connecticut regiment. They experienced very severe weather on their way to Cuba, and the ship-load under Putnam was finally wrecked off the coast. Putnam displayed all his customary coolness during the gale, giving orders to the men, and preserving strict discipline throughout the fearful scene. The men constructed rafts, which were launched and sent ashore successfully. By the aid of the line thus secured to the land, the rafts were kept going and coming to and from the ship, and all the troops were at length landed in safety. Putnam

* General Lyman was a valuable officer. His death in 1775 prevented his taking an important part in the war of the Revolution.

constructed fortifications for his camp, and waited until the storm subsided, when the troops re-embarked, and in a few days arrived at Havana.

The harbor of this famous ocean city is defended by two forts; on the east, the Morro, and on the west, the Punto. The British commander, Albemarle, besieged the former with nearly fifteen thousand men.

The siege was protracted, and put the soldiers to their highest endurance. After overcoming many and fearful obstacles, they succeeded in effecting a lodgment in a certain part of the fortress, when they sprung a mine previously prepared and threw down enough of the masonry to give them a chance to enter. The work of storming was then carried forward with vigor and success. About five hundred of the surprised Spanish garrison were killed,* and the remnant were forced to beg for quarter, which of course was granted.

Having thus obtained possession of this fortress, which had hitherto been deemed impregnable, the British were able to command the city, against which they accordingly pointed their cannon. The governor general refused to surrender, whereupon Lord Albemarle opened a fire upon the town. This speedily brought his Excellency to terms. He offered to accept such terms of capitulation as the British might

* The English loss was only two officers and thirty men.

see fit to propose. The harbor and city of Havana, together with about a quarter of the whole island of Cuba thus fell into the hands of the British, whose arms were afterwards properly respected by the powers that had dared to combine against them.* From this day, peace began to assume a permanent character on this continent, for which the harassed colonies, that had all the while been heroically fighting the battles of the mother country, were not the least grateful.†

It was now a century and a half that this struggle

* The lion's share of the prize money went mostly to the higher officers, but the subordinates got something, and Putnam received enough to increase substantially his apparent fortune in the little town of Pomfret. For an account of the grant of land to the veterans, which was allowed several years later, see below, p. 44.

Putnam also brought home with him, as a trophy of the war, a negro, Dick by name, whom he had rescued from a cruel beating at the hands of an angry Spanish master. The grateful negro would not leave his rescuer and was a picturesque sight about Pomfret for many years. Among the spoils of this encounter was the cane which the Spaniard had used as the instrument of chastisement. This cane was used by Putnam until his death, and he bequeathed it to Dick who was deservedly proud of it.

† The Treaty of Paris was signed February 10, 1763. By this treaty France ceded to England (among other territories) "Nova Scotia, Canada, and the country east of the Mississippi as far as Iberville, Louisiana. A line drawn through the Mississippi river, from its source to its mouth, was henceforth to form the boundary line between the possessions of the two nations, except that the town and island of New Orleans were not to be included in this

had been going on between France and England for the mastery of this continent. It had finally been decided in favor of the latter power; and it was now expected that France would acquiesce, and that war would come to an end. The Indians were not supposed to be interested in continuing the warfare, since neither nation would be likely any longer to require their services. Yet this opinion proved to be a mistaken one. They had a yearning desire to regain the lands they had lost to the white race, and so made a final stand for that purpose. The colonial governors held repeated conferences with some of the Indian chiefs, and tried to pacify them by assuring them of their friendship; but the red men did not like the looks of the forts with which the English were encircling their territories. Accordingly several of the tribes concerted to make a vigorous attack upon their common enemy, and did succeed in surprising and capturing a number of their forts; some of them of great importance. At the head of this warlike movement was the well-known Indian chief, Pontiac.*

cession. France also ceded the island of Cape Breton, with the isles and coasts of the St. Lawrence."

* Pontiac (1712?-1769) was a chief of the Ottawa tribe. He was the leader of this coalition of Indian tribes against the English, and the war that resulted is known as Pontiac's War,

Under his lead, the savages intended to extend their power along the line of the great lakes, gradually surrounding the English and hemming them in. Amherst thereupon hastened to concentrate his forces at the several forts on the frontier, and made ready to repel them. Captain Dalzell made his way through the forest to the fort at Detroit, which was already surrounded by the Indians; after which, he sallied forth again and gave them battle, in the early gray of the morning. In his generous and brave endeavor to rescue one of his wounded officers, he was shot by the enemy, and they both fell dead together.

The next year, Col. Putnam went to the frontier with a Connecticut regiment, which consisted of four hundred men. In this expedition, also, went Brant, the famous Indian partisan. The savages still surrounded Detroit, preventing the garrison from moving out at all, by which means they had become sadly reduced in provisions and energy. A little schooner had been sent with a load of provisions to their relief, which was attacked fiercely by the Indians, but had managed by good luck to escape. With the timely help thus offered, the commander was able to hold out until reinforcements arrived. As soon as the savages were assured that these latter were approaching, they began to disperse through the forest, afraid to risk a battle. In the course of the same season, too, a per-

manent peace was finally made with them, and thus the terrors of war ceased over the land.

Col. Putnam wrote a letter from the frontier to a friend in Norwich, Connecticut,—Major Drake,—setting forth the condition of affairs at the time in the camp. It is exceedingly interesting, and contains a lively record of the transactions in his locality. It was published in the Boston Gazette, in December, 1764.

The wars having happily come to an end, and all rumors of wars having ceased throughout the land, Col. Putnam found himself once more settled peacefully upon his Connecticut farm, rejoiced to return to those pleasanter pursuits that are especially delightful to men tired of the profession of arms. He had been an active soldier for ten years. He had no knowledge of military science, or strategy, when he began, but when he returned again to the peaceful pursuits of agriculture, he was in possession of an experience that was worth all the strictly technical discipline in the world. In fact, he had thus imperceptibly been training for that other and wider field on which he appeared to such advantage, and whereon he achieved such deeds of high renown,—the battle-field of the American Revolution.

What he had learned by this rough and rugged experience of the seven years' war, was all his own. It

was worth everything, both to himself and his country. It was around such a man that his fellow citizens would be likely to rally in an emergency like that which arose a little more than ten years afterwards. He could inspire them by his ardor, and enthusiasm, and patriotic purpose,—and he could also hold them together in solid and resistless masses, by the naked power of his character, his example, and his will.

He had not been home long, when his wife sickened and died. It was a terrible blow for him, and the grief that grew out of it gnawed sorely at his manly heart. She was the wife of his youth. They had lived together as man and wife for a quarter of a century. It was a cruel snapping asunder, therefore, of the tenderest ties that can hold two human souls together.*

* The death of Putnam's daughter Elizabeth, in her eighteenth year, occurred January 24, 1765. Mrs. Putnam died on the 6th day of April following. These afflictions seem to have awakened the religious feelings of Putnam, for he united with the Congregational church, May 19, of the same year.

CHAPTER VI.

OPENING OF THE REVOLUTION.

It is to be supposed, at this day, that every one who can read understands the causes that led the American people to take up arms against the mother country. They had sacrificed everything for the sake of preserving her honor; they had generously fought her battles; her name and renown were as dear to them as it could be to a son of England born:—but the same spirit that made them such devoted sons, rendered it likewise impossible for them to be craven suppliants, begging for favors.

King George the Third was possessed of an idea that the American colonies were chiefly useful to his throne for the *revenues* which they could be made to pay into the royal treasury. Both himself and his successive cabinets entertained that mistaken idea, and attempted to practice upon it in administering the government for their foreign colonies. And out of this very mistake grew the American Revolution. It began with a feeling of dissatisfaction at first; then followed protests; next, talk of outright refusal to do

what was commanded ; then the refusal itself, which was rebellion ; and finally the great and simultaneous movement assumed the dignified form and character of a Revolution. This same American Revolution marks one of the brightest and most hallowed spots on the page of History.

In the first place, the British ministry had caused to be issued what were styled Writs of Assistance, which were ordered for the purpose of hunting up and seizing wherever found, any articles that had been smuggled into the colonies from on ship-board, without paying the tax imposed on them. Several of the eloquent and bold orators of the day, including such men as Otis and Adams, fiercely denounced the high-handed measure, and counselled public disobedience of the order. As a necessary result, such goods as were found to have been brought into the colonies without having paid the regular duties, were at once seized, wherever found, and sold ; which would be likely rather to add to the flame of public feeling already burning, than to assist in allaying its fervent heat.

It was Grenville who first laid the plan to directly tax the American colonies, who was at the time King George's prime minister. Everywhere the proposition was met with the most indignant denunciations. But all this seemed to make no difference. In-

asmuch as the people of America had determined that it was both odious and wrong that they should be taxed for the benefit of the mother country, the ministry determined in their blind obstinacy that they should be taxed all the sooner for having dared to express their opinions. It was a matter of will, from the beginning. The English government meant to rule the people of the colonies by the mere strength of its will. But after many long years, and a weary struggle against obstacles whose force the world will never fully understand, that imperious will was humbled and broken. The people triumphed, as, with the right on their side, they ever must prevail.

The passage of the Stamp Act,* in the year 1765, brought the matter to something like a head. As soon as the news was received in this country, the ex-

* The well known Stamp Act was passed in 1765. This was a species of internal revenue, and required that all bills, leases, and many other such documents used in the colonies, should be written on stamped paper to be sold only by officers of the English government. The tax was not excessive, it was certainly less than the British subjects residing in England paid cheerfully. But the Americans at once went to the heart of the matter and denied the right of parliament to tax them at all. The Stamp Act was simply the last straw; it broke the back of the endurance of the colonists, it brought them to the fighting point. All through the colonies the cry was raised, "No taxation without representation," and the cry was never silenced. That principle lay, and still lies, at the foundation of American independence.

citement and indignation knew no bounds. The citizens of Boston and Philadelphia caused the bells to be tolled, in token of their grief. The people of New York marched in procession through the streets, bearing a copy of the odious Act, with the representation of a death's head attached to it, before them, to which they appended the motto—"The Folly of England, and the Ruin of America." The stamped papers that were sent over, were seized and destroyed; and the agents of the government, who were appointed to execute the law, were forced to throw up their offices.

Col. Putnam entered into the general spirit of resistance to such tyrannical exactions, with all the ardor of his warm and honest nature. He was active in stirring up his fellow citizens on all sides to resistance. He likewise forwarded, by every means in his power, the plans that were formed among the colonies for harmony of action in this most important matter.*

Mr. Ingersoll had been appointed the stamp master for Connecticut; and Putnam, with others, was

* A patriotic secret society was about this time established among the workingmen, known as the Sons of Liberty. Of this society Putnam was a very energetic member, and he used the society as a very effective means of disseminating far and wide the hostility against the Stamp Act. It is said that he had control of ten thousand armed men, who had "pledged to the utmost lives and fortunes to prevent the Stamp Act being enforced."

determined not to let him enter upon the duties of his office. The committee who waited upon him, requested him to resign; but as he did not answer them with a Yes or a No, they proceeded to take steps to make him comply with their wishes. Putnam was an active adviser in the entire movement. He had recently been laid up by an accident himself, but he gave particular directions how to proceed. A body of men were collected in the eastern part of the colony, who marched to Hartford, where they were told that Mr. Ingersoll would be present on the following day. He was reported to be then on his way from New Haven. Instantly the party started off to meet him by the way. They came upon him at Wethersfield, where they made him sign his own resignation, and certify likewise that he did so "*of his own free will and accord*, and without any equivocation or mental reservation." They then stood him on a table, compelled him to read aloud the paper he had just signed, and afterwards to shout three times—"Liberty and Property!" The crowd responded with due heartiness, honored him with a public dinner, and then escorted * him in safety to Hartford,

* This Mr. Ingersoll did not fail to utter a grim joke upon this occasion. The horse which he rode was white, and the cavalcade that escorted him presented a motley appearance. Referring to this incongruous scene, he declared that he now understood the meaning in the book of Revelation (vi:

where he publicly read his resignation a second time, to the delight and satisfaction of everybody who had turned out to hear it. There was not the least hard feeling over it, but the whole transaction was relished as a capital joke,—which it certainly was; besides being, likewise, a determined piece of business.

Col. Putnam subsequently had a personal interview with the colonial Governor respecting the impossibility of enforcing so hateful an act of parliament, which was perfectly characteristic of the intrepid temper of the man. The Governor asked Putnam what he should do with the stamped paper, if it should be entrusted to him by the King's authority. "Lock it up," answered Putnam, "and give us * the key." His excellency wished to know what next. "We will send you the key safely again," said Putnam. "But if I should refuse you admission to the room where it is kept?" asked the Governor. "Then we shall tear down your house for you!" replied the determined hero of the seven years' war. The story of this interview of Putnam with the Governor got abroad, and no stamped paper was ever sent into the Connecticut colony. So loud were the protests, and so open was the defiance exhibited on the part of

8) which describes "Death on a pale horse and *hell following him!*"

* *Us* refers to the Sons of Liberty.

the colonists, that the ministry finally concluded to review their former determination, and the Stamp Act was accordingly annulled. As soon as the welcome news reached this country, the change in the public feeling was too marked not to be heeded with thoughtful care by the ministry. Thanksgivings and rejoicings were offered on every side. Gladness beamed from every countenance. The talk of the people was now of their renewed affection for England and the King, and the general heart settled down into the calm joy that attends upon peace.

Trade instantly revived, and prosperity reigned. So violent a storm was succeeded by so placid a calm, that it makes one happy even at this distant day to contemplate it. Col. Putnam resumed his usual occupations on his farm again, and in their pursuit reaped the rich rewards that attend upon intelligent and contented labor. He met with one or two quite severe accidents,* during this season of peace, from which he never wholly recovered. It was at this time, too, that he added the calling of innkeeper to that of a farmer, and gave public notice that he was ready to accommodate the travelling public in

* The first of these accidents was the loss of the first joint of the thumb of his right hand. Scarcely had this healed when he sustained a compound fracture of his right thigh. This never properly healed, for his right leg was ever after nearly an inch shorter than his left.

the most faithful way he knew how; and a very popular host he proved himself, too.* People were fond of partaking of the generous cheer with which he always made their coming welcome. He hung out his sign from one of the elm trees before his door, upon which was represented General Wolfe—the youthful hero of Quebec—in military uniform, with his right arm pointing at something in the distance, and a most earnest and enthusiastic expression upon his face. This sign is now in the possession of the Historical Society of Connecticut, at their rooms in Hartford.

* On June 3, 1767, Putnam married Mrs. Gardiner. It was her third marriage as it was his second, and each party brought to the other a goodly brood of grown, or half-grown, children. Of the new life thus begun, Ellen D. Larned thus writes: "Mrs. Putnam had a large circle of friends and much experience. Her husband was the most popular man of the day. Their hospitable home drew throngs of visitants. Every soldier passing through Windham County would go out of his way to call on his beloved Colonel. Relatives, friends, travelling ministers, distinguished strangers, and gushing patriots came in such numbers that their entertainment became very burdensome. A Virginian Jefferson would submit to such an invasion, though it made him bankrupt; a Yankee Putnam could contrive to turn it into profit or at least save himself from ruin. Finding that his estate could not support such an excessive outlay, Putnam met the emergency with one of his sudden strokes, removed his residence to the Avery estate on Brooklyn Green [Brooklyn now adjoins Pomfret on the south, but at that time it formed part of Pomfret] and opened his house for general public accommodation."

The iron staples are still to be seen, driven into the old tree that waves its green crown, every summer, before the place where stood his hospitable mansion.*

Gen. Lyman, the old commander of Putnam, went to England about these times, to draw the prize money that belonged to the men who served under him in the expedition against Havana. After many years' vexatious delay, he finally succeeded in procuring the amount due them, and returned home. A few of the officers had it in their minds to take their money and purchase a tract of land west of the Mississippi. Putnam accordingly joined the party, and started off into the wilderness to locate his purchase with the rest.† They sailed to the site upon which

* Putnam helped to build the meeting house which still stands there. He was appointed sexton, a position which at that time must have been regarded as a decided honor. His salary was three pounds for the year, and his chief duties were to ring the bell on Sabbaths' Fasts, Thanksgivings, and at Lectures as is customary at other places where they have bells; also to ring it at 12 o'clock noon, and 9 at night."

† During this trip Putnam kept a dairy, which is still in existence and is interesting for more reasons than one. A few entries are here transcribed without change in the spelling, for the edification of the reader. The month is December of 1772. The "heal gait" in the first entry stands for Hell Gate.

"Sunday ye 20

passed heal gait and had all like to have ben lost by reason of a bad pilot but got through Wel—Arrived at New york about 12 aclock—in the afternone went to hear

New Orleans now stands, pushed up the Mississippi, laid out the boundaries of their new colony, and returned home again to take the necessary steps to send forward emigrants. General Lyman did return to the place the next year, and founded a settlement where Natchez stands to-day. Here he passed the remainder of his days. Putnam sent forward men for a time in his stead, and furnished them with means to bring his own portion of the lands speedily under cultivation. But other work was in immediate reserve for him, than that of leading forth a young colony to the banks of the father of waters. Events were thickening, and causes were ripening, and every sign gave promise that some great epoch in history was close at hand.

Doctor rogos preach

Monday ye 21

Capt. Laidley and Capt. Godrich Sat about rigeng and
Loding ye vesel

tuesday ye 22

it proved varey raney so that thare was but leatel to
be don

Wednesday ye 23

good weathor all hands at worke preparing the vesel
thorsday 24

varey raney and Durtrey weather but leatel Don

friday ye 25

crismos day—nothing to be Don hear—not so much as
is gineraley one Sunday in this part of ye World

Satorday ye 26

hollow Days heare.”

Although it could be urged that the odious Stamp Act had been repealed, yet the British Parliament passed a declaratory act, to the effect that the mother country had the *right* to tax the colonies, which right she should exercise just when she saw proper. Mr. Pitt was laid up with the gout at his country seat, and Mr. Townsend, who was chancellor of the Exchequer in his absence, brought forward a bill to levy duties on paper, glass, painters' colors, and teas. He also proposed a measure which aimed to appoint boards of trade in the different colonies, entirely independent of the colonial legislatures; which was as offensive as any measure of the sort well could be.

To these plans the people of America showed as much resistance as ever. They began to get ready to oppose them, if the necessity finally came, with force itself. The men of experience, therefore, like Col. Putnam, took great interest in organizing and drilling bands of young men, feeling that the time was not far off when soldiers would be chiefly needed. This was in the year 1767. The orators and leading men exerted all their influence to arouse the people to a true sense of their degradation and wrongs. Associations were formed all over the country, to further the plans of resistance. The people refused to have any intercourse whatever with the mother country. The women denied themselves everything like

foreign luxuries and exerted themselves to make up clothing with their own hands for their sons, husbands, and fathers. A spirit of opposition pervaded all classes of society. Even tea was interdicted, by general agreement, from the table, because the women would not drink what would help establish the power of England. The excitement grew greater every day. The crisis was approaching. One thought seemed to control the public mind,—one resolve fired the popular heart.

The British government of course began now to bear down all the harder. They stationed soldiers in the halls where the colonial legislatures met, in order to break up their sittings. But these bodies immediately assembled in other places, with still stronger determination to resist the tyranny of the mother country. The troops goaded the colonists almost beyond endurance. At last an outbreak did occur in King street in Boston,—now State street,—on the 5th of March, 1770; when the soldiery fired upon the citizens, and killed several; the first person who fell was a stout mulatto fellow at the head of a party of sailors, whose name was Crispus Attucks. Two others were killed on the spot, and two more died a few days afterward. There had been trouble brewing for some time between the town people and the soldiers, and on the evening of the day just mentioned

the first outbreak occurred. Early the next morning, Faneuil Hall was crowded with excited citizens, who determined that every foreign soldier should be withdrawn immediately from Boston. No men were more bold in their denunciations of the soldiery than James Otis and Samuel Adams. This event occurred on Friday night; the citizens met at Faneuil Hall on Saturday morning; and on the Monday following the troops were withdrawn and sent to Castle William, in the harbor, and the city became composed and quiet again. There were most imposing ceremonies at the burial of the victims of this sudden fight, and the "Boston Massacre" was a bloody story that served to stir still more deeply the hearts of the people to open resistance.

General Gage was the Royal Governor of Massachusetts Province at this time, and was well known to Putnam during the French and Indian war. There were others also in Boston, whom he had intimately known by means of the same companionship. He was frequently there about these days, and during the prevalence of the troubles that ushered in the Revolution. His voice was heard on all important occasions, not more by his own countrymen than by the British officers with whom he had before been a companion in arms. He openly counselled one party to resistance, and he expostulated with the

other, but to no purpose. The British officers asked him on which side he should be found, in case it should come to open war. "I shall be found on the side of my country always!"—was his prompt and spirited reply. They inquired of him again, how large an army it would take to conquer the country; in other words, if five thousand soldiers could not march the length and breadth of it, and not be troubled by the inhabitants? "If they behaved themselves, they could," was his answer; "but if they did not, and no men were at hand, the American women would drive them out of the country with broomsticks!" *

As the difficulties increased, and less and less grew the probabilities that there could for a much longer time be kept up even the appearance of peace with the mother country, committees of vigilance were or-

* The account of this affair as narrated by Humphreys, who, it will be remembered, received his information direct from Putnam, is more striking than the one given above:—

"Being once, in particular, asked 'whether he did not seriously believe that a well appointed British army of five thousand veterans could march through the whole continent of America?' he replied briskly, 'no doubt, if they behaved civilly, and paid well for everything they wanted;' 'but'—after a moment's pause added—'if they should attempt it in a hostile manner (though the American men were out of the question) the women, with their ladles and broomsticks, would knock them all on the head before they had got half way through.'"

ganized in the different colonies, whose duty it was to hold frequent correspondence with one another, acquaint the different sections of the country with what was going on, and perfect such schemes for resistance as might finally be of the greatest service. Col. Putnam was very efficient upon one of these committees in Connecticut, and kept the people thoroughly apprised of what was going forward. Besides this, he gave much time to organizing the men about him into companies, and to drilling them to the stern service which was so soon to be required at their hands. On one occasion, in September, 1774, he was the means of creating a false alarm, which called out the people all along the line between New York and Boston, so that the roads were covered. The story was that blood had been shed in Boston by the British troops, and every heart beat warily to avenge the public wrongs. It is said that as many as thirty or forty thousand men flew instantly to arms, believing that the British were firing upon the town of Boston. Gen. Gage saw what an excitement the rumor had created, and knew from this the temper of the colonists; and therefore concluded to fortify himself in his position without further delay. The moment this alarm was given, Col. Putnam mounted his horse and started off for Boston; but being met on the way by a captain of militia, he learned that the whole story

was false, and turned about and rode home again, reaching his house at sunrise on Sunday morning. The rumor grew out of the British force having silently sailed up the Mystic river during the night, and carried off all the powder that was stored in the arsenal at Charlestown.

When the conflict with the power of England finally came on, it was not even then supposed by the colonists that it would involve their total separation from the mother country; indeed, they had not once seriously thought of such a result, except to deplore it. They merely resolved to resist, perhaps believing that England would in time relent in her tyrannical demands, and give them enduring peace and prosperity. Still, let the consequences be what they might, they would at least resist. And while showing such a spirit, the King resolved that they should be forced into submission. It is not at all likely that British statesmen generally knew or cared much about the feelings of the people of this country; nor did the King, or his ministers, know or care any more. The whole plan was to extort money enough from the North American colonies to assist in defraying the enormous expenses of the British Government. The debates in Parliament on the state of America were very meagre, showing that scarcely any

interest was taken in the question, that was at all commensurate with its importance.

Troops were quartered wherever the British power thought their presence necessary. The difficulties began in Boston. Gen. Gage having occupied the town with his soldiers, and broken up the Assembly of Massachusetts, it met elsewhere, and styled itself a Provincial Congress. Committees of Safety were appointed, and it was instantly voted to raise an army of twelve thousand men. Minute men were also enrolled, to be ready to march at a moment's warning. Arms and ammunition were secured as rapidly as circumstances would allow. While affairs were in this situation, Gen. Gage despatched an expedition of eight hundred men to Concord, twenty miles from Boston, to destroy the ammunition and stores that were known to be there collected. This was the night of the 18th of April, 1775. He was very secret in his operations, yet not so secret as to elude the vigilance of the colonists, who were so closely watching them. Messages were despatched to points all along the route they would be likely to take, directing that measures should be instantly taken to oppose them.

When the British, who were commanded by Col. Smith and Major Pitcairn, reached Lexington, which is about half-way between Boston and Concord, it was just day-dawn on the 19th. They were of course

very much astonished to find a handful of Americans—seventy in all—drawn up on the green to offer them resistance. Major Pitcairn rode up before them and called out in a tone of authority, thinking to intimidate them,—“Disperse, you rebels! Throw down your arms, and disperse!” But they paid no heed to his order; whereupon he discharged his own pistol, and ordered his troops to fire into them. His order was instantly obeyed, and four of the Americans fell dead. The remainder rapidly scattered, of whom three more were slain in climbing over the fences. But they did not flee. They were joined by others, and very soon large bodies of militia were gathered in the vicinity, determined on making further resistance. The British force hurried on to Concord, captured a portion of the stores they found there, and retreated again as fast as they could, knowing that the whole country round was getting thoroughly excited against them. They had a slight skirmish at Concord, during which two of the American and three of the British soldiers were killed, and several more were wounded. It was at the old North bridge,* and the spot is now pointed out to travellers

* Emerson has written no finer lines than the opening stanza of his hymn on the *Concord Fight*:

“By the rude bridge that arched the flood,
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,
Here once the embattled farmers stood,
And fired the shot heard round the world.”

where two of the three British soldiers were slain, and where they still lie. They succeeded in destroying a considerable amount of stores, and broke open sixty barrels of flour, of which they took pains to waste as much as they could. They likewise cut down the liberty-pole in the town, and set the court-house on fire; but a woman put out the fire before much damage had been done.

Meantime the militia were collecting as fast as they could from all the towns around. So that when the British set out on their march back to Boston, they found themselves harassed in every conceivable way. From behind walls, and trees, and fences, and wherever other concealments offered, the Americans poured in a steady and well-directed fire upon them, which was terribly galling and destructive. The roadsides seemed to belch fire at their retreating and rapidly thinning ranks. Every tree concealed a musket. They could not see their enemy so as to take aim at them, and were therefore placed at every possible disadvantage. So rapid was the increase of the Americans, and so closely did they follow up the retreating body of the British, that Col. Smith resolved to get back to Boston now with all possible despatch. At Lexington there was another severe skirmish, and so tired and jaded were the British, they thought they would be obliged to surrender.

Fortunately for them, however, an express had been sent back to Gen. Gage in Boston, as soon as the British commander arrived at Lexington in the morning, acquainting him with the astonishing fact that the whole country was already in arms. So that when they reached Lexington again on their return from Concord, they were saved from surrender, or total destruction, only by the timely coming up of the nine hundred men whom Gen. Gage had sent forward in such hot haste. This detachment, which was commanded by Lord Percy, met the fatigued British about half a mile beyond Lexington. It was between two and three o'clock in the afternoon. As soon as they had formed a hollow square and received the retreating troops within its protecting lines, the latter fell down upon the ground from sheer exhaustion, panting and lolling their tongues out of their open mouths. After resting and refreshing themselves, both parties started on again for Boston. They went out of their way to destroy, by burning, two houses, two shops, and a barn, in Lexington, and then pushed on. But the provincials had been fast gathering, each man fighting for himself, and getting ready to pour in their fire again as soon as the British should resume their march. Pitcairn's horse was shot under him, and his pistols he was forced to leave behind in their holsters. They after-

wards came into Gen. Putnam's possession. Their loss was very severe, all the way. At West Cambridge they had another skirmish with the Americans, in which Dr. Joseph Warren, afterwards Gen. Warren, came near being shot; the ball knocking the pin out of an ear-curl in his hair. The British sacked, pillaged, and murdered, all along their bloody route to Boston. They came near being cut off entirely by reinforcements of the militia before they could reach Charlestown; but they at last succeeded in securing their safety. They camped on Bunker Hill that night, and on the next day went over to Boston, considerably broken in spirits, and convinced that an army of British *could not* march through the country unmolested.

On that 19th of April, 1775, the British lost in all two hundred and seventy-three men, of whom sixty were slain; the provincials lost one hundred and three, of whom fifty-nine were killed. It was not a great fight in itself, but it was great and even grand in its consequences. On that day a Nation was born. Then the freemen of America learned, for the first time, how to stand and fight for their own liberties. An authentic statement of these occurrences was drawn up by the American Committee, and despatched by a vessel from Salem direct to London. The latter city was soon in as wild an excitement, al-



Putnam leaving his plow in answer to the call to arms at news of the battle of Lexington.—Page 127.

Life of Israel Putnam.

most, as Boston was at the same moment. The ministry were openly taunted in the streets, and told that “the Great British army at Boston had been beaten by a *flock of Yankees!*”

The news of the battles of this memorable day flew on the wings of the wind through the length and breadth of the country. A man came riding through the quiet town of Pomfret on horse-back, bearing a drum about his neck, and beating it and calling out to all whom he met,—“To arms! To arms! the first blood has been shed at Lexington!” Putnam was ploughing in the field, at some distance back from his house, at the time, and Capt. Hubbard was also at work in the next lot. As soon as they found what was the cause for the alarm, they set out for the place where their services would be most likely to be wanted. Hubbard walked home, got ready his military accoutrements, and started off for Boston in his own systematic and moderate way. Putnam had his little son with him in the field. He at once unyoked his oxen and took them out of the furrow they were plowing, sent word to his wife by the boy where he had gone, took his fastest horse from his barn, and rode away at such a pace as we should have expected from a man of his well-known character.*

* Daniel Putnam, then fifteen years old, was with his father, plowing in the field when the news of the battle

On the 21st he was at Cambridge, where he attended a council of war that was suddenly called to provide for the emergency. By that time, there were at least twenty thousand American troops gathered around Boston. It was resolved to fortify all the entrances to the town without delay, and to watch the movements of the British very closely. Putnam was sent for by the Connecticut Legislature, which was then in session at Hartford, to confer with them. He hastened back, therefore, for that purpose. A regiment of troops was at once organized, and Putnam put at their head, with the title of Brigadier General. He hurried back to Cambridge, having been absent only a week. Several who served with him in the French war, now joined their services with his again in the struggle for independence.

Gen. Ward was commander-general of all the forces, though such an old and tried soldier as Putnam was looked up to with great respect and confidence by the whole body of the hastily collected mil-

of Lexington arrived. He afterwards said that his father "loitered not but left *me*, the driver of his team, to unyoke it in the furrow, and not many days after to follow him to camp." Putnam started off instantly and without stopping to change his clothes. He thus must have worn his farmer's working shirt. Trumbull, and others who have painted him as at Bunker Hill, are correct in representing him in his shirt sleeves, but wrong in giving him a *white* shirt.

itia. It is proved that these two generals for a brief time divided the responsibility between them as they best could. Ward, too, had served along with Putnam at the unfortunate storming of Ticonderoga, under Gen. Abercrombie; and thus strangely were they brought together again. The British officers did the best they could to bribe over the leading Americans. To Putnam they offered the rank of Major General in the British army, a large sum of money, and generous provision for his boys in the future. But his honest spirit spurned all their offers. He was not poor enough to consent to take bribes against the liberties of his own countrymen.

Gage offered to let the Americans, who were still living in Boston, depart, on condition they would give up their arms; but as soon as they had complied with his terms, he refused to keep his word. This only exasperated the militia so much the more. It was resolved now to erect a line of fortifications all around Boston, stretching from Dorchester Heights to Chelsea, a distance of about twelve miles. Into this work Gen. Putnam threw himself with all his usual energy. He had become well advanced in years by this time,* but his heart beat as quick as that of many men not half as old as he. The intrenchments were all thrown

* He was fifty-seven years of age. His continued activity on the farm and elsewhere kept his frame supple,

up, and every care taken neither to allow a British soldier to pass through them from out of Boston, nor any supplies to be carried in. They therefore held the British in the town in a regular state of siege.

Putnam sent a party of thirty men, on the 27th of May, over from Chelsea to Hog Island, to capture what live stock was there, that it might not be of service to the British for food. The water was not deep, and the men all waded over, and began to drive off the cattle. A party of marines were stationed there, however, and a fight of course ensued with them. A schooner was at once sent from the fleet in the harbor, to help repel the bold American militia. But the party managed to secure their prize, and retreated in good order and with safety. Putnam afterwards joined them with a larger force, and after nine o'clock in the evening they brought a single cannon to bear on the schooner, completely disabling her, so that she drifted on shore; and at day-break they took whatever there was valuable on board of her, and, after placing hay under her stern, set her on fire. The British were deeply chagrined to see one of their vessels thus captured and burned by a little force on the land, but they were unable to help themselves. By this single manœuvre, the Americans carried away many hundred sheep and cattle.*

* "I wish," said Putnam to Generals Ward and Warren,

On the 6th of June, it was agreed that an exchange of prisoners should be effected between the two armies. Gen. Putnam and Dr. Warren acted on behalf of the Americans, and received the British party at Charlestown at about noon.* They marched under escort to the ferry, and upon a signal being given, Major Small and Major Moncrief, together with their prisoners, landed from the British vessel. Putnam had served with these British officers in the French and Indian war. They had not met since those former days of hardship and intimacy. The moment they landed, therefore, they forgot all else, and rushed into one another's open arms. They embraced and kissed each other, while the people stood around and wondered what so strange a spectacle could mean. They afterwards passed an hour or two in social con-

"we could have something of this kind to do every day; it would teach our men how little danger there is from cannon balls, for though they have sent a great many to us, nobody has been hurt by them. I would that Gage and his troops were within our reach, for we would be like hornets about their ears; as little birds follow and tease the eagle in his flight, we would every day contrive to make them uneasy."

* Putnam was highly gratified that Gage should have consented to an exchange of prisoners. "He may *call* us *Rebels* now; if he will," said he, "but why then don't he hang his prisoners instead of exchanging them? By this act he has virtually placed us on an equality, and acknowledged our *right* of resistance."

verse, at the house of a gentleman near by, and at nightfall separated to meet again in hostile array, only ten days later, on the heights of Bunker Hill! So fierce is war, and so relentless is it in its demands.

CHAPTER VII.

BATTLE OF BUNKER HILL.

It became necessary now for the Americans to fortify Dorchester and Charlestown Heights, inasmuch as it had been given out that the British general had resolved to do it himself. They could gain a great advantage, if they could by their celerity get the start of the British. The enemy evidently meant to strengthen their position by occupying Charlestown Heights, from which they could easily make an irruption into the surrounding country.

A council of war was therefore held at Cambridge, at which it was finally decided, though not all were in favor of the plan, to march over to Charlestown by night and hastily throw up a fortification. Putnam favored the design with all his influence and arguments. He urged, in the first place, that it would astonish the enemy to find themselves thus unexpectedly outwitted; and, in the next place, that even if it brought on an engagement, a battle would be the best possible thing for the militia that were then collected. They would rapidly learn discipline under

fire, and their ranks would close up with true military compactness from that day forward.*

It was objected to this proposal, that there were then but sixty-seven barrels of powder to the whole army; and that it would be hardly less than insanity to bring on a general engagement, with such a trifling amount of ammunition. But Putnam pleaded to have the experiment tried. He feared nothing for the result. He knew very well that the Americans were all good marksmen, and that every soldier could kill his man. Gen. Warren tried to argue him out of his opinion; but Putnam, knowing what he did of war and its results to an undisciplined force, was convinced that a smart brush with the enemy would lead to the happiest consequences.

Orders were therefore given by Major General Ward,—who was the commander of the Massachusetts forces, and so by courtesy of the whole forces that were assembled around Boston,—to Col. Prescott, to go over to Charlestown on the night of the 16th of June, and throw up such hasty intrenchments

*Daniel Putnam reports that he had often heard his father say that his experience had taught him that raw and undisciplined troops *must* be employed in some way or other, or they would soon become vicious and unmanageable. His maxim was, "It is better to dig a ditch every morning and fill it up at evening than to have the men idle."

as would defy the efforts of the British army to dislodge the soldiers within them. A thousand men were placed under his command. It was Friday evening. Before leaving, that night, to go upon their hazardous errand, they gathered on the common in the centre of the town of Cambridge, where prayers were offered to Heaven on their behalf by the President of Harvard College.*

Gen. Putnam undertook the supervision of the expedition, although the work to be done was placed directly in the hands of Col. Prescott. Whenever, indeed, this memorable battle is spoken of by the people of this country, it will have to be admitted that these two men, above all others,—Putnam and Prescott,—began and carried forward the work which on that day was so gloriously done. Putnam had a young son, named Daniel, who was in the camp with him as a volunteer. He told the boy to go to Mrs. Inman's, that night, which was the farm-house where his quarters were; † and if it should be necessary to leave on

* Samuel Langdon.

† General Putnam's headquarters were in the Borland homestead, in Cambridge, opposite the place where Gore Hall, of Harvard University, now stands. Most of the Connecticut troops were quartered on the Inman farm. Its owner, Ralph Inman, an ardent Tory, was at the time in Boston seeking personal safety in the protection of the British troops. Mrs. Inman naturally feared that the "rebel" soldiers might give vent to their feelings by the

the next day, to depart with the rest without waiting for him. The boy mistrusted that some great danger impended over his father, and begged to be permitted to go along with him. "You can do nothing where I am going, my son," said the brave father. "There will be plenty who will take care of me."

It was very soon after dark that Prescott began his march from Cambridge over the narrow neck formed by the Charles and Mystic rivers,—a passage-way which was only about a hundred and thirty yards across. The men moved on in perfect silence, and the only lights they had to see by were a few dark lanterns, which threw the light backwards, instead of forward. Every possible precaution was taken against discovery. Bunker Hill stands nearest the neck, and is a hundred and ten feet high. Breeds Hill is near the southern extremity of Charlestown peninsula, and only sixty-two feet in height. The distance between these two hills, on their summits, is one hundred and thirty rods.

The troops first came to the foot of Bunker Hill, where they found the intrenching tools all ready for

destruction of the property, and therefore applied to General Putnam for protection. The General to relieve her fears, not only posted guards about the house, but directed his young son Daniel to lodge with the family. It was thus Daniel, not his father, whose quarters were at the Inman farm-house.

their use, having been already sent over in wagons. Until that moment, in fact, none but the leaders knew for what purpose the expedition had been undertaken. The order was to fortify Bunker Hill; but it was very apparent that it would be of little use to do that, unless Breed's Hill were fortified also, since the latter hill most immediately commanded the town of Boston. The leaders consulted what it was best to do. Bunker Hill could easily be reached by the guns from the enemy's ships near the neck, and at the same time it could not effect much damage to them in return. It was at length resolved to disobey the strict letter of the instructions, and to fortify the height which was nearest the city. Col. Gridley undertook the engineering part of the labor, which certainly required more skill than all the rest. He was obliged to hasten their conference several times, telling them that the night was fast slipping away, and that every moment was of priceless value.

When they finally reached Breed's Hill,—which has, ever since that day, taken the immortal name of Bunker Hill,—Col. Gridley laid out his plans, ran his quick eye over the ground, and set the men to work with their picks and spades with all their energy. It was full midnight before a single shovel-full of earth was thrown up. As it was summer time, the nights were quite short, and by four o'clock in the

morning it would be day-break. Hence there were but four short hours for the men to do their work. But they fell to with wonderful alacrity and vigor, stimulated still more by the examples that were set them by their leaders. Prescott knew very well how to handle a spade, and so did Putnam, who had not served for seven years around Lake George against the French and Indians, without taking such an instrument in his hands very frequently. Never were men known to labor more eagerly than did these men. They were working for their very lives, and that they knew. They had taken only rations enough with them to last for one day, and hence they felt obliged to throw up protection against the assaults of the enemy in Boston, which would furnish them with the surest reliance.

The redoubt was constructed upon the top of the hill, and was eight rods square. Its southern side fronted the village of Charlestown, and was most strongly fortified, because that quarter was thought to be most liable to the enemy's attack. Eastward it fronted an open field, which extended down to Morton's Point. A breastwork was thrown up, as if it were a continuation of this eastern side of the redoubt, but still separated from it by a narrow passage, which was screened by what was termed a "blind" in front. Another passage, or gateway, like-

wise opened from the rear wall of the redoubt, conducting down the hill.

The officers several times during the night stole softly down to the water's edge, to discover if the enemy had been alarmed by their operations on the hill; they could hear the cry—"All's well!" passed from one ship to another by the sentries, over the still surface of the water. Finding matters going on so well, Gen. Putnam hurried back during the night to Cambridge, to make the needful preparations for the struggle which he too well knew must come on the next day.

Morning dawned slowly, finding the men still engaged about their work on the hill. It was a still day, in the very flush and pride of the new summer. The British looked upon the heights, and were filled with amazement. In one brief night a work had been done,—and done so silently, too, that no soul of them all had caught a sound of what was going on,—which compelled the British army either to evacuate Boston, or to sally out and offer immediate battle. They had not given the raw American militia credit for so much energy and alacrity. Their own plans were by this single act completely frustrated. The British officers held a council of war at once, and determined to send a body of regular troops over to the hill with all possible despatch, to dispossess the de-

fiant Americans. And while the necessary arrangements to this end were being carried forward, a brisk cannonading was opened and kept up from the vessels of war, and from Copp's Hill, upon the workers on the height.

Putnam's spirit took fire with the first sound of the hostile cannon in the morning. He mounted his horse forthwith, and rode over the neck at the top of his speed. Prescott was still there in the redoubt, working hard himself, and cheering and inspiring the men both by his words and by his example. They could distinctly see the streets of Boston from the height, and descry the British troops forming and marching, and making ready for the conflict which they now knew was at hand. The American soldiers were pretty thoroughly wearied with their severe and uninterrupted night's work, and some of the officers proposed to send to Cambridge for reinforcements. "No," answered Prescott, with promptness; "they have thrown up the works themselves, and it is but fair to give them a chance to defend them." Such talk of course infused a new ardor and courage into their ranks. A messenger was, however, sent over to Cambridge for refreshments.

As soon as Putnam saw what was certain to come, he again posted off to Cambridge, asking Major General Ward for reinforcements, against the hour of

need; but the latter refused to forward any, not yet satisfied that it was not the design of the British to land at Lechmere's Point, assail the camp at Cambridge, and so cut off the body of Americans in Charlestown altogether. He had substantial reasons for believing this to be their leading design. Hence he refused to send Putnam's Connecticut regiment up to the hill at all. Putnam therefore had his attention divided between Bunker Hill and his own post at Inman's Farm, which it was equally necessary for him to maintain.

Not until he was finally convinced of the intention of the enemy to attack Charlestown heights, did he concentrate all his energies on what was there going forward. He took a handful of men, and tried to throw up intrenchments on Bunker Hill, where they had paused to decide which hill should be fortified, the night before. Could this have been done, they could have commanded Breed's Hill, even after the latter had been taken by the enemy. But the action came on so soon that they were obliged to give over their design, and hasten on to the help of their friends at the redoubt on Breed's Hill.

Between twelve and one o'clock, with a burning sun high in the heavens, a force of nearly three thousand of the best men of the British army began to land at Morton's Point, in twenty-eight barges, all

under command of Gen. Howe. They halted as they came to the shore, waiting to rest and refresh themselves, and to be strengthened by the detachments as fast as they could be brought over. Their rich uniforms and well-kept arms glittered and flashed in the bright sunlight, and created a most imposing appearance. It was soon reported in Cambridge that the British had begun to land, and the excitement was truly intense. The drums beat, the bells were tolled, and the soldiers were instantly hurrying in every direction. It was nearly two o'clock in the afternoon,—and Saturday, too,—when the reinforcements all arrived, making the British army about four thousand strong. They were all regular and tried troops, that had seen service before; on the contrary, the Americans were but raw recruits, and looked on with feelings of doubt as to the result, though with nothing like fear. The latter, too, were nearly exhausted with hunger and thirst; and what was worse, they began to entertain a half suspicion that they had been placed in their present position in order to be sacrificed.

Putnam took the general command outside of the redoubt, overseeing the arrangements of the men, and taking due advantage of all favorable circumstances. Warren, who was President of the Provincial Congress, heard of the landing of the British, while he was in Watertown; and sick as he was, hurried off to

take a part in the battle. Brave old Col. Pomeroy, too, the moment he caught the echoes of the cannonading from the vessels of war, in the forenoon, borrowed a horse of General Ward and rode down to the neck; and seeing the galling fire with which it was raked from the vessels, he dismounted and deliberately walked the whole distance through the whizzing balls, unwilling to risk the value of the borrowed animal, but caring nothing for his own life. Warren went on the hill, and offered himself to Gen. Putnam as a common soldier. The General expostulated with him, begging him to take himself away again, for his services were more needed in another place. But Warren would hear nothing to it. Neither would he consent to assume anything like command. He went into the redoubt where Prescott was, and shouldered his musket with the common soldiers. Prescott offered to transfer all authority to his hands, but the latter would not consent. He went to do simply a soldier's duty on that important day.

The British army began to advance with great regularity and order. Previous to this, Gen. Howe had ordered his artillery to play against the American lines, and, by a signal already agreed upon, caused a hot fire to be directed against the redoubt from the guns on Copp's Hill and the vessels in the river. The American guns—which numbered but two—answered

very feebly to those of the enemy ; and Callender was withdrawing altogether to the cover of the hill with them, because, as he said, his cartridges were too large. Putnam rode up to him and ordered him back on the ground, threatening otherwise to blow out his brains on the spot. He and his men returned, but they mingled with the infantry, feeling confident that they could not manage their guns to any effective purpose.

Howe divided his assaulting force into two parts ; the one commanded by himself directed its attack against the rail-fence, which was a hastily constructed defence, made of new-mown hay stuffed in between two parallel fences, and running down from a point below the breastworks, and in their rear, to near the slough which bordered Mystic river ;—the other wing, under Gen. Pigot, was to attack the redoubt. Howe's artillery did not serve him much, on account of the supply of balls being too large for the pieces, and also of the boggy and miry character of the ground. So the men were obliged to rely upon the arms they bore in their hands.

Not a word was spoken, apparently, as the splendid army of Great Britain slowly toiled up the hill in the hot sun. The Americans kept out of sight, and waited almost impatiently for the enemy's approach. There were now fifteen hundred brave hearts within

those entrenchments, eager to engage with the foe. Putnam told the men, as he passed hastily along the lines, dusty and perspiring, not to waste their fire, for powder was very scarce. "Wait," said he, "till you see the whites of their eyes, and then take aim at their waistbands! Fire low,—and pick off the commanders, with the handsome coats." Prescott gave the same orders to those within the redoubt. So did the other officers all along the lines, behind the breast-works and the rail-fence.

The moment the front ranks of the enemy came near enough, the word was given to *fire*. The execution was beyond description. Not a single shot seemed to have been wasted. The British fell down in solid ranks, like grass before the scythe of the mower. Another volley followed from behind the intrenchments; and then another; each doing as terrible work as the first; and instantly the whole body of the British were struck with terror, and broke and ran like sheep down the hill. Some of the Americans were so overjoyed to behold the result, that they leaped over the rail fence, and would have pursued them down to the water's edge, but they were prudently held in check by their officers.

It was not long before Gen. Howe succeeded in rallying his defeated troops, and bringing them up to the attack as before. The Americans made ready for

them as rapidly as they could. Putnam had ridden in hot haste across to Bunker Hill, and tried in vain to bring back the additional troops,—fragments of regiments,—posted there, so that they might take part in the battle. When the British came up to the attack the second time, there were no more Americans in the engagement than before. Four hundred men had, however, arrived in the meanwhile from Boston, under command of Major Small,* the old friend of Putnam. Gen. Howe led the way this time, telling his men they need not go a foot further than he was willing to go himself. This time they played their artillery with considerable effect. They were obliged to march over the dead bodies of their companions, which lay in rows all around them on the hillside.

* Major Small's story is as follows: "I glanced my eye to the enemy, and saw several young men leveling their pieces at me; I knew their excellence as marksmen, and I considered myself gone. At that moment, my old friend Putnam rushed forward, and striking up the muzzles of their pieces with his sword, cried out, 'For God's sake, my lads, don't fire at that man! I love him as I do my brother.' We were so near each other that I heard his words distinctly. He was obeyed; I bowed, thanked him, and walked away unmolested."

Later in the battle, when Warren fell and a soldier was in the act of plunging a bayonet into the body of the dying patriot, it was Major Small who thrust the weapon aside. The scene of this is represented in Trumbull's well known painting of the Battle of Bunker Hill. Thus does one act of chivalry inspire another.

Just at this moment, too, dense clouds of smoke began to roll up from the burning village of Charlestown at the foot of the hill, which had been wantonly set on fire by hot shot thrown from the British battery on Copp's Hill. The expectation on the part of the enemy was, that the smoke would roll in between them and the Americans, so as to allow them an opportunity to gain their rear unperceived, and likewise to reach the breastworks, which they were then resolved to scale. Fortunately, however, a light breeze lifted the smoke columns in its airy hands, and drifted them in a body out towards the sea. Thus the movements of the British were as apparent as they were before. The Americans behind their intrenchments waited until they came within the prescribed distance, and then poured in a volley that did even more murderous work than they had done before.

Whole ranks, of officers and men alike, were swept down before this resistless fire. Gen. Howe found himself at one time standing almost entirely alone. The troops were filled with direst confusion. It was more than their officers could do, to hold them together. The broken ranks could not be closed up and made whole with the help of any exertions. No threats had the least effect upon the panic-stricken regulars. Alarmed, and dispirited, and overwhelmed

with double confusion, they turned their backs in a body and ran off down the hill, beyond the reach of the provincial's deadly musketry. Gen. Clinton, the British commander, saw the rout that had been created by the stubborn provincial militia, and felt mortified and chagrined; so much so that he hastily threw himself into a boat, and, some five hundred more following, crossed over with the reckless resolution of serving as a volunteer. A part of the British officers protested against marching up the hill again, to meet with certain destruction; but Howe had by this time found out where the weakest point in the works lay,—between the breastworks and the rail-fence,—and determined to make one final effort to carry it. It is also related that some careless soldier within the redoubt was overheard to say something about the scarcity of the ammunition; and this fact, when reported to the officers, gave a little more encouragement to the enemy.

Gen. Howe, therefore, led the third attack against the American left, especially against the point on the slope between the breastworks and the rail-fence. Gen. Pigot, aided by Gen. Clinton, marched up to attack the redoubt, aiming also to turn the American right. The orders to the British soldiers were to take the fire of the Americans, and then to charge bayonets and scale the works. This is what they should have

done in the first place; and what they would have done, had they known how short the Americans were for ammunition.

While the British were getting ready to come up to the third assault, the Americans had time to refresh themselves, and in some degree to recover from the protracted fatigue of the night and day. They also began to hope, from the long interval that elapsed between the second and third attacks, that the enemy were finally defeated, and would not venture to come up again. Well might they have hoped it was so, for they knew too well how low their ammunition had begun to run; and as for their muskets, there were very few bayonets to them all. Therefore, in this brief interval, they cast about to know what they should do if the emergency really came. Some prepared to club their muskets, after having first discharged them at the enemy. Some collected stones and other missiles, to hurl at them in the last necessity. They thought of everything, in fact, but fear.

Meantime Major General Ward sent over three regiments to the field, hoping to help the troops to hold the hill. One detachment of about three hundred did pass over the neck; but the fire from the vessels' guns that swept the entire passage was so severe, that the men hesitated when they reached the spot and saw the almost entire hopelessness of making the

attempt. Putnam first ordered these three hundred to fall to work intrenching Bunker Hill, but afterwards ordered them forward to the lines. He was working like a hero all the while, riding to and fro at the top of his speed, to get the scattered forces on Bunker Hill into martial order, and to lead them on to the defence of Breed's Hill. He also rode down to the neck, and shouted to the recruits on the other side to come over, and lend the aid of their bayonets. He then dashed across the exposed passage, through the rain of the balls from the enemy's cannon, in order to show them that they had nothing to fear.* But it was to no purpose.

On came the British, at length, for the third time. The Americans stood firm and resolute in their lines, prepared to receive them. The British artillery soon turned the breastworks, however, sweeping the whole line of their interior. The Americans were of course thus driven within the redoubt, the breastwork being abandoned. But they had taken sure aim before they

* Putnam that day rode several times back and forth between Charlestown and Cambridge. A private soldier afterward described him as being "without a coat, in his shirt-sleeves, and having an old white felt hat on." His absolutely reckless exposure to the fire of the enemy, and his escape from all harm, had no little effect upon his soldiers. They were, says Swett, perfectly convinced that *he* was invulnerable,—but not equally conscious of being so themselves. They thus declined to share with him the danger.

left, and brought down many a proud British officer. General Howe himself was wounded in the foot. There was but one round a-piece to the provincials now, and when they had expended their first fire they knew they must make a hand-to-hand fight of it. Hence they fired with just as great precision as before, every shot bringing down its man.

Then it was that they were put to their true mettle. From that moment it was every man for himself. The British came jumping over the walls of earth, with fixed bayonets. They were received with showers of stones in their faces, with muskets used like clubs over their heads, and with resistance in every possible style. The fight was man against man. Every inch of ground was stoutly contested. The redoubt was already fast filling up with the enemy, and the Americans saw that nothing was left them but to retreat. Major Pitcairn,*—the same who opened the

* “ Although Putnam was not present at the battle of Lexington, the pistols which he carried in the American Revolution were a trophy of that eventful day. They were none other than those of Major Pitcairn who had discharged one of them when he gave his soldiers the order to fire on the minutemen who were drawn up on Lexington Green. Later in the day, when the British were retreating, Pitcairn's horse was shot under him, and in the haste of dismounting, in order to escape his pursuers, the British officer left his weapons behind him. They were captured by the Americans, and, a few weeks later, were offered as a gift to Washington, but he declined them. They were

revolution on Lexington Green in April,—was one of the first to mount the walls of the redoubt, and he was instantly shot by a negro soldier, while shouting to his reinforcement of marines behind him,—“Now for the glory of the marines!” Prescott ordered a retreat, feeling certain that they could maintain their position no longer. This was carried out in perfect order, the men keeping their faces to the foe, and resisting stoutly for every foot they were obliged to yield. Prescott and Warren were the last to leave the redoubt. The butts of the American muskets cracked loud over the heads of the British soldiers, and were in many cases shivered into fragments. There was a glistening of steel in the sun, and a clash and ring of bayonets and musketry. There were shoutings and curses, and an indescribable confusion of sounds and voices. The faces of many of the militia were smutted and blackened with powder, so that they were scarcely known to their companions and friends. Col. Gridley, who planned the works, was wounded and carried off the hill. Prescott received several bayonet thrusts, but fortunately was

then presented to Putnam and were his constant companions during the rest of his military career. These silver-mounted and handsomely engraved pistols are now kept in the Cary library at Lexington, having been given to the town by the widow of John P. Putnam, of Cambridge, N. Y.”
—Livingston.

not wounded. Warren retreated even after the latter did, and was shot through the head by a musket ball, dropping dead in his tracks. There he lay until he was recognized the next morning by Dr. Jeffries, a British surgeon, and an intimate friend; when he was taken up and buried on the spot where he fell. He was mourned by the whole army and province. Gen. Putnam felt his loss as keenly as any one could; he compared his fate with that which a few years before overtook young Lord Howe at his side, while marching against the French at Ticonderoga.

Parts of regiments at this juncture came pouring down from Bunker Hill, and did effective service in covering the American retreat. At the rail-fence, which was manned by Putnam's Connecticut troops, with others, a successful effort was made for a short time to prevent the British from turning their flank, and so the latter were kept in check until the main body could safely make their way out of the redoubt; but for this resolute stand, the retreating militia must have been cut off entirely. But as soon as they saw that the rest of their comrades had taken to flight, they left their position with all possible despatch. Putnam tried every method to induce them to stand firm, flying into a towering passion, and using language that was for a long time afterwards remembered for its profanity. The old man could not bear

the thought of their deserting their ground, and it is said that he was not wholly aware at the time how low they had run for powder. "Make a stand here!" he shouted. "We can stop them yet! In God's name, fire! and give them one shot more!" Pomeroy, too, with his shattered musket in his hand, tried to rally them for one more effort; but it was in vain.

Putnam covered their retreat in person, and was not more than twelve rods distant from the enemy, and fully exposed to their fire. He came to one of the field-pieces that had been deserted, which he roundly swore should not be given up to the enemy. Only one man could be found to remain there with him; and he was in another moment shot down at his side, and the rapid advance of the British with fixed bayonets drove him from the cannon also. Colonel Trumbull, the painter of the Revolution, has represented Putnam, in his great battle piece at the national Capital, in the act of defending this field-piece and covering the retreating militia. The painter has attired him in a splendid blue and scarlet uniform; whereas his dress on that day was strikingly different from that, and more truly befitted the character of the man and the nature of the work he was engaged in. An old soldier, who was in the fight of that day, has told us exactly how the General was clad, and how he looked. He says that he rode about

the hill, and across the neck between Charlestown and Cambridge, in order to report to Gen. Ward,—“without any coat, in his shirt-sleeves, and with an old felt hat on his head.” This was certainly more a dress for useful, than for ornamental purposes, and would not be likely to encumber or embarrass any one who had hard and hasty work to do.

The Americans retreated in good order down the hill and across the neck, compelled, however, to run the gauntlet of the galling fire from the British vessels. Many of them were killed, as was to be expected. They next took up their position on Prospect and Winter Hills, about a mile distant, which they proceeded at once to fortify. Here they lay all night. The British occupied the ground they had so dearly gained, and remained there in quiet until morning. Had they pursued their advantage, and pushed on upon Cambridge, it would have proved a great day's work for them, after all. Many wondered at the time why they did not. But when the report of their losses on that day came to be given, there would seem to have been the best reason in the world for the neglect. Out of between four and five thousand troops that were sent over from Boston, their loss in killed and wounded amounted to fifteen hundred. It was too terrible a slaughter for them to recover from, in so short a time. Clinton, however, was

for pushing on; Howe was more timid, and advised that the troops remain and rest where they were.*

This day's work was proof enough that the Americans could boldly resist oppression and tyranny.

* Of the place and influence of General Putnam in the battle of Bunker Hill, Livingston writes: "Putnam's activity at the rail fence and near the redoubt in encouraging the men and commanding them not to waste their powder, but to wait before firing until they saw the white of the enemy's eyes, the authority which he exercised in withdrawing men with intrenching tools from Prescott to throw up earthworks on the second eminence, his repeated trips across Charlestown Neck to obtain reinforcements, his attempts to rally the men during the retreat, and his orders after his troops came to a halt on Prospect and Winter Hills, are all evidences that he was the foremost leader in different parts of the field."

Washington Irving writes: "Putnam also was a leading spirit throughout the affair; one of the first to prompt and one of the last to maintain it. He appears to have been active and efficient at every point; sometimes fortifying; sometimes hurrying up reinforcements; inspiring men by his presence while they were able to maintain their ground, and fighting gallantly at the outpost to cover their retreat. The brave old man, riding about in the heat of action, on this sultry day, 'with a hanger belted across his brawny shoulders, over a waistcoat without sleeves,' has been sneered at by a contemporary as 'much fitter to head a band of sickle men or ditchers than muskeeters.' But this very description illustrates his character, and identifies him with the times and the service. A yeoman fresh from the plow, in the garb of rural labor; a patriot brave and generous, but rough and ready, who thought not of himself in time of danger, but was ready to serve in any way, and to sacrifice official rank and self-glorification to the good of the cause."

They had seen the fire and smoke, and heard the yells and groans of battle. On that Saturday afternoon, in an engagement which lasted about two hours in all, they lost, counting the killed, wounded, and missing, four hundred and fifty men. This was in no sense a victory on the part of the British. They gained the field, because the ammunition of the Americans gave out too soon; but they certainly lost the battle. Besides this, they learned a lesson which they refused to read before, that the people of America would fight to the last drop of blood for their rights, their soil, and their firesides.*

* The moral or political effect of the battle of Bunker Hill was very great. It roused the excitement of the colonies as no other event could have done. Blood had been shed, Dr. Warren had fallen among the rest, the provincial militia had shown fighting qualities quite equal to those of the flower of the British regulars. The battle left the Americans more determined and hopeful than ever before. The British held the ground, but they lost more than they gained, and thus the phrase, "a Bunker Hill victory," has passed into proverbial speech.

CHAPTER VIII.

SIEGE OF BOSTON.

THERE was no retreat for the Colonists after the battle of Bunker Hill. The Rubicon had been crossed. They had taken the sword, and made their appeal to the God of battles; and by the sword, under the directing care of a kind Providence, must they only hope to stand or fall.

There was no formal compact, or union, as yet, between the several Colonies; yet they were even then conferring together, through their delegates in Philadelphia, as to the best method of making effective resistance to the tyrannical demands of England. This Congress possessed no particular power to pass any acts which should bind the Colonies, but was convened more for the purpose of conferring upon the wisest plans for them to adopt. Massachusetts had proposed a federal union, and likewise offered to subscribe to any plan of the kind which should be brought forward and established. The delegates from the other New England Colonies agreed to the same thing.

Congress therefore acted with promptness, as it should have done, if at all. It proceeded at once to organize and officer a regular army, and placed Washington at its head. There were four Major Generals appointed under him,—Lee, Ward, Schuyler, and Putnam. General Washington came on to Cambridge, and assumed his high office on the 2nd day of July. He also gave Putnam the commission which he brought on from Congress, without any delay. From others he withheld their commissions for a time. Some of the Brigadier Generals felt aggrieved that they had been superseded by men who ranked lower in the armies of the separate colonies, and left the army in consequence. Jealousies and heart-burnings like these called for the exercise of the highest degree of patience and tact on the part of the Commander-in-Chief; and it was fortunate for our liberties that the country at that time had a man like George Washington to place in supreme command. It is sufficient to add that these officers returned to the army again, consenting to overlook what had at first given them such deep dissatisfaction.

The British immediately began to fortify Charlestown, and carried out the plans of Putnam himself upon Bunker Hill. They likewise strengthened their defences in Boston to the fullest capacity. Washington, upon taking command, formed the army into

three divisions: Major-General Lee commanded the left wing, reaching to the Mystic river,—Major-General Ward commanded the right wing, stationed at Dorchester and Roxbury,—and Major-General Putnam commanded the advance of the centre, while the Commander-in-Chief himself made his head quarters at Cambridge. Putnam saw Washington for the first time in his life, when he arrived at Cambridge, and the acquaintance thus formed ripened into a friendship and intimacy, which lasted through the whole of Putnam's remaining days.

It is reported that a flag of truce arrived at the American lines, about this time, which had come from Major Small, the old friend of Putnam. Small wished to see Putnam on urgent business. The latter consulted with Washington as to the expediency of meeting him as requested. Washington advised the step, and Putnam accordingly went over. Major Small only wished to make a proposal to his former companion in arms, on behalf of the British commander. It was that Putnam should desert the Continental Army, throw his influence on the side of the King, and receive therefor—as offered to him once before,—high rank, a liberal compensation in money, and bountiful provision for his sons. Putnam treated the proposal as he had treated it once before,—with indignation and scorn. The story goes, that Putnam

confided the proposal to no one but Washington, and that it remained a secret for several years.

The Americans exerted themselves without cessation to hedge the British in; and for this purpose they erected defences and fortifications at every point, in a wide circuit of a dozen miles around Boston,—from Dorchester Heights to Charlestown,—where the enemy would be likely to make an attempt to pass through. Thus they were completely blockaded, except to the seaward. Winter Hill, Prospect Hill, and Ploughed Hill were fortified, to prevent them from making their way up the Mystic River. Putnam exerted himself greatly to fortify the latter hill, since it most immediately checked any advantage they might attempt to take from their position on Bunker Hill. He never refused to work with his own hands, entering into the labor required with all his native impetuosity and ardor.

Congress put forth a solemn Declaration of War, on the 6th of July. It was, at the time, quite doubtful how it would be received by the army which Washington was so actively engaged in organizing; and it was feared, if they should refuse to adopt it as an expression of their own sentiments, that they would break up and return in time to their homes. They had enlisted for no definite period, but had come forward as volunteers to repel the assaults of

the British on Boston. The Declaration was read at head-quarters, at Cambridge, by the President of Harvard College, on the 15th of July. On the 18th, it was read to the division under command of General Putnam, on Prospect Hill; after which the soldiers shouted "Amen" three times, a cannon was fired, cheers were given by the troops, and the flag of Connecticut was thrown to the breeze, bearing on one side the motto, "*An Appeal to Heaven*," and on the other "*Qui transtulit, sustinet*." * The *Essex Gazette*, in narrating the event, said,—“The Philistines on Bunker Hill heard the shouts of the *Israelites*, and, being very fearful, paraded themselves in battle array.” For some time after, frequent skirmishes occurred between the two hostile armies, which tended to make the raw American soldiers alert and mindful of discipline.

A description of the American camp in those days, from the pen of an army chaplain, is very interesting at this time:—"The generals are upon the lines every day. New orders from his excellency are read to the respective regiments, every morning after prayers. The strictest government is taking place, and great distinction is made between officers and soldiers. Every one is made to know his place, and keep in it.

* "He who transplanted, sustains." This is the motto of Connecticut.

or to be tied up and receive thirty or forty lashes, according to his crime. Thousands are at work every day, from four till eleven o'clock in the morning. It is surprising how much work has been done. * * * * Who would have thought, twelve months past, that all Cambridge and Charlestown would be covered over with American camps, and cut up into forts, and intrenchments, and all the lands, fields and orchards laid common; horses and cattle feeding in the choicest mowing land, whole fields of corn eaten down to the ground, and large parks of well regulated locusts cut down for fire-wood and other public uses? This, I must say, looks a little melancholy. My quarters are at the foot of the famous Prospect Hill, where such preparations are made for the reception of the enemy. It is very diverting to walk among the camps. They are as different in their forms as the owners are in their dress, and every tent is a portraiture of the temper and taste of the persons who encamp in it. Some are made of boards, and some of sail-cloth; some partly of one and partly of the other. Again others are made of stone or turf, brick or brush. Some are thrown up in a hurry; others are curiously wrought with doors and windows, done with wreaths and withes, in the manner of a basket. Some are your proper tents or marquees, looking like the regular camp of the enemy. In these are the Rhode Is-

landers, who are furnished with tent equipage and everything in the most exact English style. However, I think this great variety rather a beauty than a blemish in the army."

Washington felt the want of powder in his army, during this summer and autumn, more than anything else. He found, to his surprise, that at one time he had but thirty-two barrels for the entire army. Privateersmen were fitted out to attack the enemy's vessels that were hovering on the coast, and one of the latter was finally captured by Capt. Manly, with a large supply of cannon and ammunition. There were no powder mills in the colonies then. Washington was very much afraid, too, lest the British commander should find out his condition in this particular. Vessels were fitted out from various ports for the West Indies, to bring back supplies of powder alone. New England rum was sent to the coast of Africa, where it was exchanged for the much needed commodity.

The British numbered about thirteen thousand men, while the Americans hemming them in counted nearly fifteen thousand. In November, Gen. Putnam threw up other fortifications on Cobble Hill, which was somewhat nearer to the enemy in Boston than Ploughed Hill, which had already been occupied. This intrenchment went by the name of "Put-

nam's impregnable fortress," while the one at Prospect Hill, which was his head quarters, was called "our main fortress." The former was briskly fired upon by the British cannon, both from Bunker Hill and from their vessels, while the men were engaged in throwing it up; but no damage resulted. As soon, however, as the fortifications were completed, the guns that were mounted within them opened on the gun-boats and batteries of the enemy on Charles river, and effectually drove them from their troublesome position. General Gage was becoming uneasy, thus shut in by the American army. His men lay idle; vice was fast increasing in the ranks; intoxication was becoming quite common; and the entire body of the troops showed signs of a rapid demoralization. He saw his mistake in remaining where he was. He dared not march out into the surrounding country, and strike a blow; for it might be that he had not the present strength. There was also much rising disaffection both among his officers and soldiers. The Americans printed handbills, and circulated them secretly within the British lines; and these trifling things were a prolific cause of permanent mischief. There is a handbill now in possession of the Massachusetts Historical Society, which was printed in London, and circulated among the soldiers who were about to embark as reinforcements for America. On

one side is the phrase, “ *Before God and man they are right.*” On the back of the same, and evidently printed after its arrival in this country, were two statements, as follows, the reader remembering that at Prospect Hill were Putnam’s head quarters, and at Bunker Hill those of Gen. Howe:—

PROSPECT HILL.

- I. Seven dollars a month.
- II. Fresh provisions, and in plenty.
- III. Health.
- IV. Freedom, ease, affluence, and a good farm.

BUNKER HILL.

- I. Three pence a day.
- II. Rotten salt pork.
- III. The scurvy.
- IV. Slavery, beggary and want.

General Gage wrote home to Lord Dartmouth, in the month of June,—“ The trials we have had, show that the rebels are not the despicable rabble too many have supposed them to be.” In July he wrote again, in speaking of the rebellion,—“ This province began it,—I might say this town; for here the arch rebels formed their scheme long ago.” Provisions at length began to grow very scarce. Gage sent out parties to obtain plunder of this sort, but they always returned

unsuccessful. Finally, in order to thin out the population, it was determined to dismiss all the inhabitants of Boston who were willing to go; it being estimated that there were between six and seven thousand in the town, whose absence would make quite a difference in the amount of supplies required. Those who wished to leave were told to send in their names; but as they were expressly forbidden to carry any of their plate away, or money to the amount of more than five pounds—or twenty-five dollars,—to each person, not more than two thousand names were given in. People of property would not go, to leave their wealth behind them, to be seized and divided among a foreign soldiery. But in the number of those who did leave, many of the women quilted their silver spoons and coin into their under-garments, and so carried off much of their valuables in safety.

Congress began to grow impatient that Washington had not yet risked a pitched battle, and winter now fast coming on. They found fault, some of them, with his inefficiency. He was placed, however, in most trying circumstances. He was very short for the necessary supplies of war, while the soldiers began to consider the time close at hand—in September—when the term for which they had enlisted had expired. He was himself, therefore, in favor of bringing on an action between the armies as

soon as it could be done advantageously; but the officers about the council board thought otherwise. He drew up a letter to Congress, describing his situation; and a more melancholy picture than he sketched, it is not easy to imagine. He laid the whole blame upon the shoulders of Congress, and charged it upon them that the paymaster "had not a single dollar in hand," and the commissary general could not strain his credit any farther. He told them whose fault he thought it was, that a majority of the troops were "in a state not far from mutiny, upon a deduction from their stated allowance." Winter was approaching, and what, he asked, was to be done? All this, only three months after he had taken the command.

Gage was called home in October, and General Howe was appointed to the command of the British in his place. The latter general, however, was as unwilling to attack the Americans as Gage had ever been. He had tried their mettle for himself, in the battle on Breed's Hill. So he strengthened his position in the town as much as he could, and prepared to pass the winter comfortably where he was. He fortified Bunker Hill more strongly still, and added to the defences on Boston Neck. He pulled down many buildings in the city, and erected military works in their place. He tore out the pews of the "old South Church," and converted the building into a riding

school for his cavalry. A British gentleman wrote from Boston in October, "we are now erecting redoubts on the eminences on Boston Common; and a meeting-house, where sedition has been often preached, is clearing out to be made a riding-school for the light dragoons." Another writer says, "in clearing everything away, a beautiful carved pew, with silk furniture, formerly belonging to a deceased gentleman in high estimation, was taken down and carried to Mr. John Armory's house, by the order of an officer, who applied the carved work to the erection of a hog-stye."

A committee * came on from Congress late in the autumn, to confer with Gen. Washington and lay down some definite plan of future operations. Dr. Franklin was of the number. Many of the soldiers left pretty soon after, their terms of enlistment having expired; but an appeal to the people of New England, which was soon made, called forth a warm and most cheering response. Ten thousand men placed themselves in readiness to march at a moment's warning. And pretty soon after, the wives of the officers joined them in the camp, which brought around lively times for the Christmas holidays.† The wife

* This committee was composed of Dr. Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania, Colonel Benjamin Harrison of Virginia, and the Hon. Thomas Lynch of South Carolina.

† Mrs. Putnam occupied the Inman house, from whence

of Gen. Washington came on from Mount Vernon, not considering herself, just then, safe in Virginia.

In January of the next year, 1776, the British made preparations to send a fleet around to New York. Washington heard of it, and ordered Gen. Lee across the country to that city, with authority to collect such an army as he could along his route, and then make the best defences for the city he was able. Connecticut especially helped him to a large force. He at once proceeded, therefore, to fortify the city, the heights on Long Island, and the Highland passes on the Hudson. Washington resolved at length to force the enemy to an engagement, in spite of the advice of a council of war to the contrary. He therefore made ready to occupy a strong position on Dorchester Heights, where he could command the town and the harbor. These heights are now within what is called South Boston.

On the night of the 2d of March, he opened his she dispensed gracious hospitality. She made use of the equipages which she found in the stable of the Inman farm. On one occasion the punctilious authorities of Cambridge, denying her right to use the Inman coach, compelled her to alight and walk home. This affront stirred up the General to a degree of indignation that was expressed in language vigorously regardless of rules of elegant usage; and this drew from the meddlesome officials a suitable letter of apology, in which they express the "highest gratitude" for the "extraordinary services" he had rendered to the town of Cambridge.

fires from an opposite direction upon the city. These he kept up for the two nights following. The object of this was, to deceive the British as to his real intentions; so that when they looked up at the Heights on the morning of the 5th of March, they saw the morning of the 17th of June previous acted all over again. They were struck with terror. They saw that the Americans now had it in their power to do with them almost what they chose. They had but one course to pursue, and that was to retreat. The British commander planned an expedition against the fortified Americans, under the command of Lord Percy, but it amounted to nothing. A storm succeeded in scattering the boats in which the troops had embarked, which Washington himself very deeply regretted; for had it occurred otherwise, he was sure that the entire British army would have fallen into his hands. His own plan was to send a division into the city from another quarter, the moment the force under Lord Percy should leave it to attack Dorchester Heights; and Gen. Putnam was to have led on this assault, with four thousand men. The story goes, that while this plan of Washington's was under discussion in the council of officers, Putnam could not sit easy in his chair, but kept going continually to the door and windows to look out. Washington urged him to be quiet,—to sit down and give his advice as

certain questions came up to be decided. "Oh," said Putnam, "you may plan the battle to suit yourself, General, and I will fight it!" Whether true or not, it is characteristic enough to be quite probable.

Nook's Hill—which was still nearer to the British—was fortified on the night of the 16th of March, and then they knew they might as well be going. Accordingly they made all possible haste to embark. They began to move at sunrise, and by the middle of the forenoon were on board their vessels, and on their way out to sea. This was glorious news indeed. Boston was at once ordered to be occupied by two detachments of troops, under command of Gen. Putnam. He took possession of all the fortifications which were thus hastily deserted, amid general congratulations and rejoicings. It is related that the British left wooden sentries on Bunker Hill, with muskets fixed upon their shoulders; but they inspired the Americans with no great amount of fear, and did not so much as serve to draw the charge from a single musket.

CHAPTER IX.

OPERATIONS IN NEW YORK.

THE British fleet, with all the troops on board, sailed immediately to Halifax. Gen. Howe expected at that point to be reinforced from England, before proceeding to make any further demonstrations against the Colonists. But he soon found his quarters there too close to be altogether comfortable, and afterwards left for New York, reaching Staten Island in the latter part of June.

Major General Lee, having had time merely to plan his defences in and around New York, was ordered in haste to take command of the Southern army, and posted off to South Carolina for that purpose. Putnam was sent to New York in his place, and assumed command there forthwith, receiving his orders from Gen. Washington on the 29th of March, or only twelve days after the British left Boston. His special duty was to complete the defences that had been designed by Gen. Lee, and to put the army under his immediate command in as good a state of

discipline as he could. His head-quarters in New York were opposite Bowling Green.* His family were with him there, and in his military family were, with others, Major Aaron Burr,† his own son, and Major—afterwards Colonel—Humphreys, who wrote the first biography of the old soldier that was ever read.

Gen. Putnam had hard work to quell the feeling of disaffection which he found to be so common around him.‡ Oftentimes plots were set on foot by

* Putnam was quartered in the Kennedy house which stood at No. 1, Broadway, on the spot where the Washington Building now stands.

† When Putnam's aide-de-camp, Webb, was transferred to a similar position under Washington, he was succeeded by Major Aaron Burr, who was at that time twenty years of age. Putnam grew very fond of Burr, but the latter contracted such feelings of hatred against Washington that he would have left the service but for the intervention of John Hancock, president of Congress.

‡ New York was an aristocratic town, and the influence of the Tories was there dominant. The conflicts between the two parties were frequent and often bitter. The presence of the patriot army emboldened the whigs to perpetrate upon their rivals acts of horse play that astonished the friends of their victims. One instance is recorded in the diary of the pastor of the Moravian Church. "Here in town very unhappy and shocking scenes were exhibited. On Monday night some men called Tories were carried and hauled down through the streets, with candles forced to be held by them, or pushed in their faces, and their heads burned; but on Wednesday, in the open day, the scene was by far worse; several, and among them gentlemen,

Americans who favored the British cause, to overthrow which required all his vigilance and industry. There were plenty of loyalists on Long Island, and in New Jersey, who were not at all backward in aiding the designs of the enemy, by performing the service of spies upon the doings of the Americans. At one time they had matured a plan to suddenly seize the person of Gen. Putnam, and deliver him over to the British. Putnam declared martial law, which of course subjected the city to strict military rule, such as prevails in a camp. No inhabitant was allowed to pass any sentry at night, who could not give the countersign. The people, likewise, not yet having had any open rupture in that quarter with the British, were in the habit of trading with their vessels in certain commodities that were wanted by them, which of course produced a strikingly bad effect; this traffic General Putnam forthwith stopped; he would not tolerate any commerce or communication between the fleet and the shore. Those who were taken in the act of going to and fro were treated as open enemies. He appointed an Inspector for the port, whose duty it was, among other things, to give permits to the oystermen.

were carried on rails; some stripped naked and dreadfully abused. Some of the generals, and especially Putnam, and their forces had enough to quell the riot, and make the mob disperse."

He sent a body of a thousand men over to fortify Governor's Island, and also threw up defences at Red Hook, and along the Jersey shore. The great object then was, to prevent the British from landing; having no navy, it was useless for the Americans to think of giving any trouble to the enemy's fleet where it was. Finding that the expected reinforcements were but slow in coming forward, the British general again put to sea, hoping perhaps to fall in with them. Putnam, however, still kept at work according to the original plan, and performed a vast deal of labor, little of which at this time makes any show on record, in rendering the city safe against the assaults of enemies either without or within. A British ship, about this time, sent a boat on shore for refreshments, containing a midshipman and twelve sailors. Putnam ordered an attack on all such visitors, agreeably to which order two of this boat's crew were killed and the rest taken prisoners.

Washington left Boston, and reached New York about the middle of April. He very well knew that the next effort of the British would be to strike a successful blow here, for, with a base line for operations like New York, they could penetrate northward to Canada, eastward into New England, or westward into New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Hence his exertions were all put forth to prevent the city's falling

into their hands. Governor's Island had been fortified by Gen. Putnam already; which effectually checked the entrance of the ships from the Narrows. Hulks were now sunk in the channels of East River and the Hudson, to prevent their vessels coming up. The great need about the fortifications was heavy cannon. Could the Americans have been properly supplied with these, the city would never have fallen into the hands of the British as easily as it afterwards did. While affairs remained in this posture, Washington went on to Philadelphia, to exchange views with Congress, which was still in session there; and during his absence Putnam again resumed the chief command. He was much occupied, in the absence of the Commander-in-Chief, in putting down the secret schemes and plots of the Tories, many of whom were to be found in the lower counties near the city, on Long Island, and along the Connecticut shore. Several of this class were arrested, and one was finally tried and executed, as an example.*

* What is known as the "Hickey plot" takes its name from Thomas Hickey, a member of Washington's Guard. He was bribed by the Tories to organize the conspiracy, the purpose of which has been described as follows: "Every General Officer and every other who was active in serving his country in the field was to have been assassinated; our cannon were to be spiked up; and in short the accursed scheme was laid to give us into the hands of the enemy and to ruin us." The plot was discovered and its

It being continually expected that the enemy would soon arrive with a larger fleet and army, every exertion was made to be ready to give them a fitting reception. Congress recommended the building of fire-boats, or rafts, to oppose the ships in their entrance from the Narrows; and to this subject Gen. Putnam gave his immediate and earnest attention. The expectation of the daily arrival of a large British fleet was not a vain one; for Howe's brother—Lord Howe, or Admiral Howe, as he was called,—soon made his appearance off New York, with reinforcements that at once gave the conflict a much more serious character than it had even assumed before. This arrival occurred about the middle of July. Just previous to this event, however, the immortal Declaration of Independence had been passed by the Continental Congress in Philadelphia, declaring the Colonies of North America no longer Colonies of Great Britain, but *free and independent States*. This was a step forward, and, for those times, quite a long one. It was extremely doubtful how this act on the part of Congress would be received by the army, and much anxiety was for a time felt concerning it. John Hancock, the President of the American Congress, sent

leader promptly hanged. Very soon after this, the large British fleet, numbering forty-five vessels arrived in New York Bay.

a copy of it to Gen. Washington, who immediately caused it to be read at the head of the army, at six o'clock in the evening, accompanying his order with the recommendations of a true and large-souled patriot.

Together with the force under Admiral Howe, and that of Gen. Clinton, who had also returned at about the same time from the south, Gen. Howe was placed at the head of an army of nearly twenty-five thousand men, the very flower of the European armies. Many of these were troops that had been hired for the war by England, who were called *mercenaries*. The Hessians were of this character. These troops were experienced in the art of war, and were already in a very high state of discipline. Against them the American Commander could muster only about seventeen thousand men, raw militiamen, but ten thousand of whom were said to be good for anything like active service. The design of the British General was to pass up the Hudson, and, by preventing any further union between the people of the Eastern and Middle States, to conquer the one and put a stop to what was still considered only a growing disaffection in the other. Accordingly, not long after their arrival off Staten Island, two vessels of war set out and run the gauntlet of the American fortifications, on their way up the Hudson. The American guns opened on them

as they passed, but the wind being favorable, they received little or no damage; by taking advantage, also, of a very high tide, the enemy's vessels cleared the sunken hulks without any difficulty. After passing the forts, they anchored in Tappan Zee, a broad part of the river some forty miles above the city. In this position they could not be reached from the shore, and they could intercept whatever supplies came down the river for the American army.

The most that could be done by the American commander to annoy the enemy in their new position was done faithfully. To this end fire-boats were constructed, and *chevaux-de-frise* was sunk across the river. Fourteen fire-ships were prepared to sail secretly among the enemy's vessels of war, and destroy them by burning. But, as it turned out, nothing came of all these ingenious devices. The Americans should have had a well-equipped navy, in order to compete successfully with the enemy hovering on their coasts. There was one invention, however, that excited a great deal of interest then, and deserves to be mentioned in this place. It was a marine apparatus, called the "American Turtle," and was the device of a man by the name of Bushnell, belonging to Connecticut. It was a machine, shaped as nearly like a turtle as might be, large enough in its interior to contain a man, and provided with a galvanic ap-

paratus and a supply of powder with which, after having first secured the powder to the bottom of the enemy's vessel, to produce an explosion. The man sitting within it could row himself about in any direction, and was furnished with lead ballast to sink himself out of sight below the surface of the water.

It so chanced that Bushnell could not accompany this machine on the expedition for which it was designed, and so a fellow named Bije (Abijah) Shipman was procured in his place. Putnam, with several other officers, went down to the shore, early one morning, the design being to drift down the stream and fasten his explosive instrument underneath the flag-ship of Admiral Howe,—the Eagle. Just as he was about to ensconce himself within the curious craft, he must needs imagine that he could not get along without a quid of tobacco. He struck his head out of his hiding-place, and told Gen. Putnam that he *must have* a fresh cud, the old cud in his mouth would not last him half the way there. None of the officers could just then supply his want, though they promised him all he wanted at a future time. He declared he knew the plan would fail, and all for the want of a fresh chew of tobacco! It did fail. Putnam watched late into the morning to witness the explosion under the Admiral's ship, but none took place. He studied the proceeding keenly through his

glass, and at last descried the little black object drifting away just to the left of the Eagle. It had not come up quite in the right place. The sentinels on board the ship saw it as it rose, and fired off their muskets at the strange object. "Bije" went under as if they had sunk him with their shot. He had detached his powder magazine, which exploded in about an hour after, as designed, throwing up a tremendous spout of water all around. The Eagle, as well as the other vessels of the fleet near by, made haste to lift their anchors out of the mud and sail away. From that day until New York finally fell into the hands of the British, their vessels kept at a very safe and respectful distance. "Bije" declared that he got his turtle under the Eagle, as intended; but, on the first trial, the screw with which he was to secure the powder-magazine to her bottom struck against a piece of iron; this made him "nervous," and he could do nothing afterwards! It all fell through, just because he was obliged to hurry off without a fresh cud of tobacco! *

* David Bushnell, the inventor of the torpedo, was too frail in body to endure the labor of rowing it. He however taught his brother to manage it perfectly. The latter was unfortunately down with a fever at this time, and so the work was committed to the care of Shipman, who was not trained to it. Whether the "chaw" of tobacco would have made good his lack of skill and training is a matter

Washington ordered Gen. Greene to take up his position at Brooklyn, on Long Island, which was strongly fortified against an attack from the Island, by a line of defences extending around from Wallabout Bay to Gowanus's Bay. These were considered sufficient protection against the approaches of the British by the land, while other defences furnished security against attacks by sea. Behind these defences, stretching from one bay to the other, was a high ridge,—or back-bone, so to call it,—thickly covered with a growth of wood. There were only three places where they could be traversed by a force of cavalry, or through which artillery could be taken; and at these three points were roads, regularly constructed, which led from the ferry at the Narrows to Brooklyn itself.

Unfortunately enough, Gen. Greene fell sick of a fever, just at this critical time, and the command devolved on Gen. Sullivan. On the 22d day of August, the British, under command of Gen. Clinton, commenced landing from their ships, being well protected by their guns. They made one encampment at Flatland, and another, chiefly of Hessians, at Flatbush. The British were divided, in fact, into

of conjecture. The explosion certainly had the effect of instilling into the British no small degree of terror, though it did fail to destroy the flag-ship.

three sections; a right, a centre, and a left. Lord Cornwallis commanded the first, De Heister the second, and Grant the third. The wooded heights formed the natural barrier between the two armies. If the British, therefore, were to fall upon the American forces, they could hope to reach them only by one of the three roads, or passes, above mentioned.

Washington sent over Gen. Putnam to take command of the camp in Brooklyn, on Sunday, the 25th day of August. The battle—called the Battle of Long Island in history—took place on the 27th. With Putnam likewise went over a reinforcement of troops, consisting of six battalions. The directions were particularly to protect the passes through the woods by every means possible. Gen. Sullivan had pushed forward from the American camp in Brooklyn, and erected a strong redoubt on the heights that commanded Flatbush, where the Hessians lay in force.

To the east of the wood, there was a narrow pass that conducted from Jamaica to Bedford, and so to the rear of the American works occupied by Gen. Sullivan. This was so circuitous to reach that it was thought the point least in danger; and perhaps, also, in consequence of the sudden illness of Gen. Greene and the consequent change of command, its importance as a post in the entire plan of defences had not

received quite as much attention as it deserved. Gen. Clinton found out that the party which guarded this pass was not so strong but that they might be easily overcome; and in order to take timely advantage of the discovery, he left his camp at Flatland, at nine o'clock on the evening of the 26th, and stealthily marched round to surprise the militia stationed there. He reached the place just before the day dawned; and so unexpected was his approach, that the entire party surrendered themselves prisoners, without offering any resistance. This single point turned the entire fortunes of the day.

Clinton had previously arranged, that at about the time when he should have taken this pass, the right division should make demonstrations on the American left, or against the other extreme of their lines, in order to draw off their attention from the real danger. These arrangements were carried out to the letter, and with surprising success. Gen. De Heister also made a simultaneous attack with his Hessians upon Gen. Sullivan's redoubt over Flatbush. But neither attack was intended to be much more than a feint to keep the Americans from any suspicion of the real design. So that Clinton finally stole unobserved through the easterly pass, leading from Jamaica, with the van of the British army, supplied with all the artillery and cavalry he would be likely

to require, and successfully turned the American left. And not until the British had, in fact, come round and suddenly burst on the American rear, were the latter aware of their danger. De Heister now seriously attacked Gen. Sullivan's works in the centre, while Clinton came upon them in the rear. There they were, hemmed in between two divisions of a hostile army. There was no alternative but to surrender, and Sullivan did surrender. He was taken prisoner himself, as well as a large part of the force under his immediate command. Many of the Americans, however, fought their desperate way through the enemy that pressed hotly upon them, and retreated in safety to the camp at Brooklyn.

At the same time that the battle was going on between the American centre and the British centre, as above described, Gen. Grant was bringing up the British left to attack the American right, commanded by Lord Stirling. This resulted also in a rout of the latter force, most of whom, however, made good their way back to Brooklyn. Stirling was himself taken prisoner, together with the body of militia he had led forward to the vigorous assault which he made upon the enemy in order the better to cover the retreat of the remainder. Sullivan did all that a brave man, suddenly surrounded by an enemy far superior in numbers, could have hoped to do. He

fought bravely for two long hours, maintaining his ground for that time against odds that would have appalled many a commander less courageous and self-reliant than he.

Gen. Washington came over from New York during the heat of the engagement, and, from the camp in Brooklyn, himself witnessed the hopeless loss of the day. The British were two against the Americans' one, and our troops were in all respects inferior to those whom they were called to meet. The Commander-in-chief could not suppress his deep excitement at seeing the havoc thus suddenly produced by the enemy; yet there was nothing that he could do then to retrieve the fallen fortunes of his army.* Gen. Putnam continued to carry out his orders in strengthening the defences of the camp, and providing for the next step that had already been decided on. For it became instantly evident that the Americans could not hold their present position. They must either risk another attack from Clinton which could terminate only in signal disaster, or take counsel of prudence, and retreat.†

* As he looked on that desperate encounter, in which the struggling patriots were hopelessly forced back, he exclaimed: "Good God! what brave fellows I must this day lose!"

† "The cause of the defeat," writes Livingston, "is apparent at once. The flanking force on the Jamaica Road out-

Washington chose the latter. Had the British pursued their success without any delay, they would unquestionably have struck the last and heaviest blow at the American Revolution; it would then have appeared on the pages of history only as a rebellion. But in the very flush and excitement of victory, they suffered the main advantage, and their only permanent advantage, too, to escape them. The neglect was very similar to that of which they were guilty immediately after carrying the works on Bunker Hill.* There were less than five thousand Americans in this battle, on the 27th of August, of which number the army lost some eleven hundred, and the most of those, prisoners. The estimate goes that nearly two thirds of all who were engaged were under Lord Stirling, on the American right, the greater part of whom effected their retreat to the camp in perfect safety. The prisoners taken comprised the small parties at the pass on the Jamaica road, who were cap-

numbered the whole American army. The wonder . . . is not that five thousand half-trained soldiers were defeated by twenty thousand veterans, but that they should have given General Howe a hard day's work in defeating them, thus leading the British general to pause and giving Washington time to plan the withdrawal of his army from its exposed situation."

* It is probable that General Howe learned from his experience at Bunker Hill to be extremely cautious in attacking Americans who were fully intrenched.

tured by Clinton before daybreak, and the body under Gen. Sullivan, who found themselves suddenly beset on one side by the Hessians, and on the other by the British, under Clinton, who had stolen around and fallen upon their rear.

The enemy, instead of pushing forward at the moment of victory, contented themselves with sitting down before the American defences, and at once began to erect batteries from which to assail them. Clinton fell to this work with energy, on the very next night after the battle. On that same night, too, Washington and Putnam silently removed their camp, with all its provisions, equipage, ammunition, and general accompaniments, and went over the river. There were nine thousand men to be got across, and it must all be done in a few hours, and in perfect silence. Washington proved himself equal to so wonderful a task; one which has rarely been equalled, certainly never surpassed, in the annals of successful or unsuccessful war. The British sentinels descried the American rear-guard crossing over in the midst of the fog, just as the day broke in the east. The latter were clear out of reach of the enemy's guns, and had eluded them in a way they least expected.

The entire American army, therefore, now lay concentrated in New York. Governor's Island was abandoned, and all the troops were called in. The British

possessed themselves of the deserted positions on Long Island without any delay, and thus the two armies were separated only by the narrow breadth of East River, at the farthest point not more than a half mile across.

CHAPTER X.

RETREAT OF THE AMERICAN ARMY.

A LONG line of fortifications was at once erected by the British on Long Island. A portion of their fleet sailed around and entered the Sound at its eastern extremity, but the main body of it remained at anchor not far from Governor's Island, to operate in the direction of either the East or Hudson river, as the case might be.

Washington's quick eye saw what was the enemy's object, at a glance. They intended to cut off his communication with the back country, and by surrounding him and his army where they then were—on New York Island,—to compel a speedy surrender, and so bring the war at once to a close. In order to foil the enemy, he proceeded to send off the stores that were not immediately required for the army. Next he formed the army into three divisions, one of which remained to defend the city, which was placed under command of General Putnam,—one was sent to Kingsbridge, some distance up the island,—and one was stationed between the other two, so as

to be ready to go to the help of either in case of an attack. Thus they remained from the 8th of September until the 12th. It was plain that an assault was to be made very soon, and a council of war at last concluded it was best to evacuate the city forthwith. The stores had already been removed, and were now safe. On the 15th of September the retreat itself began. It commenced a little sooner than was at first intended, on account of an attack from the enemy at Kip's Bay, some three miles above the city. The Americans who were stationed there fled in a cowardly manner when they saw the enemy approaching, and the reinforcement of two brigades sent up from the city by Putnam, likewise turned and fled as soon as they came in sight of the deserted works. Washington hurried to the spot in a towering excitement, and with his flashing sword ordered the panic-stricken men whom he met to turn back and give the enemy battle. But neither menaces nor personal example availed. For himself he appeared perfectly reckless. He was left almost alone within eighty yards of the enemy, who were already beginning to surround him; and had not some of the soldiers who were near sprang forward and forcibly turned his horse by the bridle, he must have been taken prisoner.*

* The noise of the fighting at Kipp's Bay was heard by

Upon this movement, the Americans fell back upon Harlem Heights. The British ships—a part of them—three days afterwards moved towards the upper end of the island on the Hudson river side, and anchored opposite Bloomingdale. Putnam retreated last from the city, and of course was exposed to a double danger; he had to run the gauntlet of the enemy now occupying the main road on the easterly side of the island, and the fire of the ships that had taken position on the Hudson at Bloomingdale. He chose the latter route for his retreat, and began his rapid march. It was an extremely sultry day, and the men were quite overcome with the heat and fa-

both Washington and Putnam, and the two generals started in haste for the scene. By chance they met, and Putnam was present when Washington tried in vain to rally his men. This was one of the occasions when the calm and self-contained commander-in-chief completely lost control of his temper. He rode among the panic-stricken soldiers, roundly abusing them for their cowardice, and even striking some of them with his cane. Putnam, too, did his utmost to rally the men. Then it occurred to him that if the British were able to extend their lines across from the Hudson to the East River, the patriot army would be caught in a trap and forced to surrender. Their only hope of safety, therefore, was to escape at once. Accordingly he rode back to the city at full gallop to get his troops away while there was time. His aide-de-camp Burr had divined the situation tolerably accurately and started the troops at once. Thus Putnam, on his return, found his army already in motion; which was very fortunate, for at that crisis the fate of the cause hung upon the few minutes of prompt marching.

tigue. They fell fainting by the side of the road, as they hurried on; they stopped to slake their feverish thirst at the brooks, and lay down and died while in the act of drinking. The exertions made that day by General Putnam were almost superhuman. He pushed his horse to the top of his speed, riding from one end of his division to the other. The animal was flecked with foam. Major Humphreys, his biographer, who was with him on that trying occasion, wrote that when they had nearly reached Bloomingdale, an aide-de-camp came from Putnam at full speed, to inform the regiment to which he belonged that a column of British infantry was close upon their right. The regiment filed off rapidly to the left, and their rear was fired upon just as they had slipped past the line which the British had now succeeded in drawing across from river to river.* The Colonel of the regiment was shot down and killed on the spot. The other divisions of the army had given up General Putnam's command for lost; and it was not until after dark that his brigades all came in safety inside

* It is said that if the British had been ten minutes earlier they would have cut off Putnam's retreat and captured his army. Their mistake was in their over confidence. They supposed that their victory at Kipp's Bay settled matters, and so they moved with deliberation. The clever trick of Mrs. Murray, narrated in the next paragraph, was one of the factors that saved the army.

the lines. Considering the many difficulties with which Putnam had to contend, his safe retreat is to be set down as a truly wonderful performance.

Sir Henry Clinton had hurried over from Kip's Bay, on the easterly side, expecting to cut off Putnam's force, should it previously have escaped the snares set for it below. In the pursuit of this plan, it was necessary for him to pass along the east of Murray Hill, and intercept the Americans at a point beyond. On Murray Hill lived a gentle but very shrewd Quaker lady, the mother of the well-known grammarian, Lindley Murray. General Putnam sent forward a message to her, requesting her, when Sir Henry Clinton should reach her house, to detain him by some innocent stratagem until the American army could have time to get beyond his reach. The course of the latter lay to the west of the hill, and so on northwardly. Presently the British general came along. Mrs. Murray was known to several of the officers, and it was thought no more than an act of courtesy in her to go to the door and invite them all in to take a glass of wine. They were glad to accept such an invitation, and accordingly went in and sat down to her hospitalities. The ladies present engaged the officers in agreeable conversation, and they very soon became oblivious how time was flying. Presently a negro servant, who had been stationed by his mis-

tress on the top of the house to keep watch, entered the room and gave the sign previously agreed on. Upon which Mrs. Murray begged Sir Henry Clinton to step out after her, as she had something she wished to show him. He followed her in silence to the observatory on the house-top; and she then pointed triumphantly to the retreating column of Americans in the distance, already marching over the plains of Bloomingdale. The General did not so much as stop to take his leave, much less to thank his fair hostess for her hospitalities; but dashed at a headlong pace down the stairs, mounted his horse, and called on his troops to follow after at the top of their speed. But his intended victims had quite escaped him. The hospitable *ruse* of the lady had done its work well.

The British under General Howe were thus in full possession of New York, a portion of their force occupying the city, but the greater part being pushed forward to the upper end of the island. They stretched their hostile lines across from one river to the other. Up at Kingsbridge were the Americans, as strongly fortified as their position allowed. Advanced posts were also occupied by the American troops, at one of which General Putnam was placed in command. Parties of the enemy appeared in the plains between the two hostile camps, shortly after

the retreat of the Americans to Kingsbridge. Lieut. Col. Knowlton,—a very brave young officer from Connecticut, who served at the rail-fence during the battle of Bunker Hill,—came in and reported to the Commander-in-chief the strength of one of these skirmishing parties. He was immediately ordered to make a circuit and gain the enemy's rear, at the same time that an attack was made on them in front. The enemy saw fit to change their position before Knowlton became aware of it, and he fell upon them rather in flank than in rear. In the heat of the conflict, to which he led his men forward with very marked bravery, he fell, pierced with the enemy's bullets. His wounds proved mortal; but the men under him maintained their ground, and finally drove the British from their position entirely. No one in the army felt the death of Knowlton more than General Putnam. He was his particular pet and favorite; he had served under him in the French and Indian war, was also present at the taking of Montreal, and bore a part in the memorable hardships attendant on the Havana expedition. He was born but a few miles above Pomfret, in the town of Ashford, and had risen from rank to rank in the army with great rapidity. General Washington lamented his death in his general orders of the next day, taking the same occasion to hold him up to the army as an

example of bravery well worth their emulation. In contrasting the conduct of the men on that day with their cowardly conduct at Kip's Bay, Washington observed that this last skirmish showed "what may be done, where officers and soldiers will exert themselves."

The policy of the British commander now, as the armies lay opposite one another, was to bring on a general engagement. Washington, however, was averse to putting so much to hazard. While he felt very certain that in a pitched battle he could hardly expect anything but defeat, he was also quite as well satisfied that he had it in his power to harass the enemy to the last extremity of endurance. Upon this latter, and only remaining plan, therefore, he had at last determined.*

But General Howe was not yet willing to give over all further efforts to tempt, or force, the American commander into the field. Disappointed, however, in one way, he was none the less ready to try another.

* The two armies lay facing each other for about a month. During this time Putnam's men executed one of their dare-devil feats. On the plain below his camp, and between his line and that of the British, there was a fine field of wheat ready for the harvest. Putnam's men went out at night and succeeded in gathering in about one half the crop, when the dawning of the day revealed the harvesters. The British came down in greatly superior numbers, and Putnam's men withdrew with their prize without giving battle,

Accordingly he set on foot a plan to gain their rear, cut them off from all communication with supplies in the back country, and, having thus surrounded them, to force them to lay down their arms. Nothing was more plausible, in the way of a plan, and the results expected from it would be very certain to follow; but the trouble arose in the attempt to carry it out into practice. Still, Howe was eager to make such an attempt. For this purpose, he ordered several vessels of war up the Hudson, which managed to pass Forts Washington and Lee without receiving any material damage; a few days afterwards he took with him, in flat bottomed boats, a large part of his army up through Hell Gate, and landed at Throg's Neck, not far from the village of Westchester. This was about nine miles above the American encampment on the heights of Harlem.

The British next set out across the country in the direction of White Plains. The American force lay stretched along a line some dozen miles in extent, all the way from Kingsbridge to White Plains. They invariably held possession of the heights along the route, which gave them every desirable natural advantage. As General Howe had now disposed the two armies by his new movement, the little Bronx river was all that lay between them. On the other bank of the Bronx, and about a mile from the main body, was

posted Gen. McDougall, with fifteen hundred militia. He occupied a hill also, and it was easy for his men to wade the river over to the main body, at the point where he was stationed. Howe determined to attack this position of Gen. McDougall, for which purpose he despatched one body of Hessian troops to march around and surprise him in rear, while a second body of British and Hessians came up and assailed him in front. The Americans, after a vigorous resistance, were compelled to give way, but they kept up a spirited and galling fire from behind the stone walls as they retreated. Putnam was ordered to reinforce McDougall, and hastened to do so; but he met the latter in full retreat, and it was not judged proper to try to retake the height from which his men had been dislodged.

Washington expected that the British would follow up this advantage with a general attack, and he labored energetically through the night to increase the strength of his present defences. Howe concluded to postpone the attack, however, till another occasion. In the meantime, on the night of the first of November, which was dark and opportune for the purpose, Washington withdrew his whole army to a post about five miles distant, whither he had already managed to send his baggage and provisions. Howe was not inclined to offer him any further molestation where

he was, but turned his attention to Forts Washington and Lee, which the Americans continued to hold, much to the annoyance of the British, because they were still in their rear. First he made a demonstration against Fort Independence, at Kingsbridge. The Americans deserted that fortification as soon as they saw the British approaching, and retreated to Fort Washington. A detachment of British pursued, and took up a position between Fort Washington and Fort Lee; while the rest of the army, with General Howe at their head, returned by the Hudson to New York.

It was thus apparent to Washington that Howe contemplated an invasion of New Jersey. To provide against this, he ordered General Putnam to take command of all the troops enlisted from the west of the Hudson, and to cross the river at once. This he did on the 8th of November, and posted himself at Hackensack. Fort Lee was placed in the command of General Greene, with power to defend Fort Washington, which was on the New York side of the river. Greene was invested with discretionary powers in relation to the defence of these two posts, and a difference of opinion arose between himself and Washington as to the policy of attempting to hold them any longer. The Commander-in-chief believed the effort useless, especially as the enemy were concen-

trating their forces for an assault; but Greene thought they should be held to the very last, and proceeded to strengthen Fort Washington accordingly. He placed Colonel McGaw in command there, with what he considered an adequate force to defend the place. On the 15th of November, McGaw received a summons from Gen. Howe to surrender, threatening, if he did not, that the garrison should be put to the sword. McGaw refused, and sent a despatch across the river to Greene, informing him of his situation. Greene in turn forwarded the intelligence to General Washington, who was at Hackensack with Putnam. Washington hastened to Fort Lee, and, not finding Greene there, pushed in the night across the river to the other fort. He met Greene and Putnam in the river, on the way back, with the news that the garrison would hold out without any difficulty. Accordingly all three went back to Fort Lee. On the very next day, however, the British general stormed Fort Washington and put the garrison to the sword, as he had threatened. On that single day, three thousand of the Americans perished.

It was worse than useless now to attempt to hold Fort Lee, and Washington directed the immediate removal of the ammunition and stores. They set to work to accomplish this as hastily as possible; but before they could fairly get clear of danger, they

found themselves nearly hemmed in by a British force under Lord Cornwallis, on the tract between the Hudson and Hackensack rivers.

They managed to secure their escape across the Hackensack, but it was at a great risk; and even then, they left their cannon, tents, and a large quantity of stores behind them, which in their precipitate flight they were compelled to relinquish. And now they were hardly better off than before; for parallel with the Hackensack runs the Passaic for a long distance. The British could again hem them in, if they followed up the pursuit; and to avoid the same danger the second time, they effected another hasty retreat across the Passaic.

Now began to set in the dark days of the Revolution. The militia were discouraged with nothing but retreat and defeat, and left the army in large numbers as fast as their terms of enlistment expired. The military stores amounted to scarcely anything worth mentioning. It was late in November, and bleak winter was close at hand. Not more than three thousand men in all still remained under the standard of Washington. All around them were disaffected persons and open loyalists; and the army had thus a double foe to fight, and a double danger to overcome. One by one the cities of New Jersey fell into the enemy's hands,—Newark, New Brunswick, Prince-

ton, and Trenton; they took possession of the country as fast as the Americans retreated. And when that "phantom of an army"—as Hamilton called it,—that still clung to Washington, crossed the Delaware on the eighth day of December, there was nothing but that single river between the over-running enemy and the city where the Continental Congress daily met to consult for the future of the nation that was not yet born. The brothers Howe—the General and the Admiral—seemed to have everything their own way. They held the entire country from Rhode Island to the Delaware, and none knew how long before they would strike the blow, so much dreaded, against Philadelphia itself. They also scattered proclamations all over the land, especially among those who had not yet fully decided to embrace the cause of America against England; and in these proclamations they freely offered pardon and favor to all who, within a given time, would take the oath of allegiance to the King. A great number embraced the offer thus made, and by so much of course darkened the prospects of those who were still hoping and toiling for the ultimate independence of their country.

General Putnam stood by his great Commander's side through the whole of this dark disaster, unshaken in his resolution to do all that he could do for his native land. When others faltered, he never hesi-

tated or swerved. Upon *him* Washington knew that he could depend, even if all others finally failed him.

Congress having resolved that Philadelphia should be defended to the last extremity, Putnam was directed to enter upon the work of erecting the proper fortifications. "Upon the salvation of Philadelphia," wrote Washington, "our cause almost depends." His selection of Putnam to take supreme command there, sufficiently attests the high confidence he reposed in his ability and character. He wrote to the President of Congress, on the 9th of December, that "a communication of lines and redoubts from the Delaware to the Schuylkill, on the north entrance of the city, might be formed;" that "every step should be taken to collect a force, not only from Pennsylvania, but from the neighboring states;" and that the communication by water should be kept open for supplies. Putnam found a disaffected class of people,—and people of wealth and influence, too,—in the city, against whom it was very trying for him to set up his own authority, with any hope of success; yet he did succeed in bringing order out of disorder, and by his sleepless energy established the authority of the American arms. He was summoned before Congress to confer with that body respecting the city's safety, and in obedience to his suggestions they resolved to adjourn, and did ad-

jour on the 12th to meet again on the 20th of December, in Baltimore.

He at once placed the city under martial law, as he had previously done at the time he held supreme command in New York. Yet he was extremely prudent about making any display of his authority, too; doing nothing that would cause needless irritation on the part of the disaffected inhabitants, and using every proper means to conciliate their confidence and good will. He labored to complete the defences, with all his energy; so arduous were his exertions, that his health for a time gave way under them. He had, in fact, a double duty to perform; to erect defences against the enemy without, and to secure himself from an enemy equally formidable within the city. It was while General Putnam was thus engaged, that Washington boldly moved forward and struck two decisive blows,—at Trenton, and then at Princeton,*

* On the night of December 25, 1776, Washington, with 2,400 men, crossed the Delaware river, pushing his way through the formidable ice floes. The next day he marched the ten miles to Trenton in the face of a severe storm, and attacked and defeated a force of 1,500 Hessians under Rahl. About one thousand Hessian prisoners were captured.

In the battle of Princeton, which was fought January 3, 1777, Washington defeated a portion of the army of Cornwallis and captured the town.

These victories were timely, and they did great service to the cause by reviving the drooping spirits of the patriots. There is no medicine for a discouraged army like the news of a rousing victory.

—which suddenly electrified and energized the whole army and country. It was a part of the plan to have Putnam cooperate in these brilliant exploits of the Commander-in-chief, both with a portion of his Philadelphia troops and a body of Pennsylvania militia; but the fear of a sudden rising among the loyalists of the city made such a design impracticable. Two letters from Washington to Putnam, one just on the eve of these bold enterprises, indicate very plainly what were the feelings of the Commander-in-chief at that time. In the first, he advises General Putnam to remove the public stores to a place of greater safety, as the enemy had said they would enter the town within twenty days; but in the other, written some days afterwards, he expresses the opinion that the British are seized with a panic, and that he will yet be able to drive them out of the Jerseys altogether.

Finding that affairs were thus taking a favorable turn, he ordered Putnam into the field again. He was directed, on the 5th of January, 1777, to march the troops under his command to Crosswick, a few miles southeast of Trenton, where he might be able both to keep a strict watch on the enemy and to obtain any advantage that offered. Washington's plan was to harass the British army by every method within the reach of his ingenuity. Putnam was ordered to keep spies out continually, so that he might

not be taken by surprise; and also to make it appear to the enemy, by such means as he could, that his force was a great deal stronger than it really was. Inasmuch as the British seemed inclined to make no demonstration against them, but rather concentrated for the remainder of the winter in New Brunswick and Amboy, Putnam was soon after ordered into winter quarters at Princeton, which was some fifteen miles distant. He had but a handful of troops with him at the most; and had he been attacked in his position at any time, would have been forced to retreat without offering battle.

He employed every device to conceal from the enemy the actual paucity of his numbers. In the battle of Princeton, Capt. McPherson, a Scotch officer, had received a wound which it was thought was about to terminate fatally. Until Putnam quartered in the town, however, he had not even had medical attendance, it being considered that, as he was likely to die any day, it was therefore quite useless; but Putnam provided him with a careful physician, as soon as his case was known, who did all that he could for his relief. Being in his presence one day, the Scotchman protested his gratitude, and asked Putnam to what country he belonged. "I am a Yankee," said the general. "I did not believe," answered

the sufferer, "that there could be so much goodness in an American, or in anybody but a Scotchman." The poor fellow thought himself about to die, at length, and begged that a British officer, a friend of his, might be sent for, under a flag of truce, to come and help him make his will. Putnam wished to gratify the dying man's request, but it would not answer to let a British officer see what a meagre force he had around him. Indeed, to tell the truth, he had but fifty men in the town at the time, all the rest of his men having been sent out to protect the country around. Putnam's mother wit, however, was as ready as ever to serve him. He sent out a flag of truce with the errand, enjoining upon the messenger not to return with the British officer *until after dark*. The moment evening came on, therefore, Putnam had all the windows in the college buildings illuminated, as well as those in the other vacant houses of the town. He likewise kept his little squad of fifty men marching up and down the streets continually, and making as much of a martial display as possible. Under such highly imposing circumstances was the British officer conducted to the quarters of his Scotch friend, and finally suffered to depart. When he got back to the British camp again, he reported that General Putnam could not have

under his command a force of less than five thousand men.*

To protect the friends of the American cause from the persecutions of loyalists, was a duty that during this time engaged much of the labor of Putnam, and likewise exercised all the judgment, delicacy, tact, and prudence, of which he was the possessor. The rest of the winter was occupied chiefly with skirmishes. Col. Neilson was sent, on the 17th of February, with a hundred and fifty men, to surprise a party of loyalists that had fortified themselves at Lawrence's Neck. There were sixty of the other party, belonging to what was called Cortlandt Skinner's brigade. They were all taken prisoners. Major Stockton, their commander, was sent to Philadelphia by General Putnam, in irons.†

* In this Putnam was more than fulfilling the instructions of Washington, who wrote from Pluckamin, January 5, 1777. "You will give out your strength to be twice as great as it is." He led the enemy to believe that his strength in Princeton was nearly one hundred times as great as it was.

† In a letter describing this action, Putnam calls the Tory Major Stockton "The enemy's renowned land Pilot." To the officers appointed to conduct the prisoners in irons to Philadelphia, he gave orders that "no indulgences should be allowed the Villains which affords them a possibility of escape." Putnam was criticised for cruelty in this matter, but it must not be forgotten that he was astonishingly magnanimous to a fallen foe. He doubtless was right in feeling that the efficiency of the service required meas-

Not long after this, another party of foragers was reported to be scouring the country, and Major Smith was sent forward to hang on their rear until Putnam himself should come up. But the Major was a little impatient, or ambitious of renown, and fell upon the party, which he had already enticed into a snare, putting them to rout and carrying off several prisoners, horses, and baggage-wagons.

Thus the winter of 1776-7 passed away. In the time he had been in New Jersey, General Putnam had taken a thousand prisoners, and at least a hundred and twenty baggage-wagons. In one skirmish he captured ninety-six wagons, laden with provisions for the enemy. He likewise by his prudence, and his firm but conciliatory manner, added great strength to the American cause, and when he left the Jerseys at last, which he did in May, he left them in a very different condition from that in which they were when he first set foot upon their soil. Few men, in the army or out, could have performed the service for which the Commander-in-chief thought him in all respects so admirably qualified, and which he accomplished so successfully.

ures of severity towards the Tories who were giving much aid and comfort to the enemy.

CHAPTER XI.

IN THE HIGHLANDS.

THE British were manœuvring just at this time so strangely, that Washington was hardly able to determine what object they really had in view next. They had a force in Canada, under Burgoyne, with which it was thought Howe was anxious to open a communication by the Hudson River; then it was suspected that the Canada troops would go round to New York by sea, and thus effect a union with the troops under Howe without risking an attempt by land; and then again, in the month of July, it was a greater mystery still in which direction Howe was going, when he set sail with his army from the port of New York. All these contingencies the American commander was obliged carefully to guard against.

To this end, it was necessary, first, that the fortress of Ticonderoga should be strengthened, and provided against a surprise; second, that the passes in the Highlands should be so guarded as to prevent any union of the two hostile armies by way of the river; and third, that the important post of Phila-

delphia should be defended to the very last extremity. Enough, one would think, to engage all the energies of any commander.

The Highlands were to be defended at all cost and hazard. An ingenious method had already been devised by Generals Greene and Knox to obstruct the passage of the enemy's ships up the river, by means of a heavy chain, supported at regular intervals by floating logs of wood, and stretched across from one shore to the other. A couple of armed vessels were also to be stationed so as to rake the enemy's ships, whenever they might approach. Arnold had been previously entrusted with the command of the river, on account of Washington's sympathy for the treatment with which Congress had visited him; but as his own private affairs compelled him to be in Philadelphia, his command was transferred to Gen. Putnam, and the latter took post at the head of the army of the Highlands, in the month of May, 1777.

The excessive labor and exposure which was required of Gen. Putnam, while energetically carrying out the plans for the protection of the river, are thought to have brought on the sudden assault of disease which, not much more than two years later, compelled his countrymen to dispense with his active services altogether. The width of the river where

the cable was to be thrown across, was five hundred and forty yards. The cable was not to be stretched over in a straight line from shore to shore, but diagonally, in order to offer a more effective resistance to the current of the river. Working early and late about business of this character, being out in all weathers, and often standing in the water for hours together, was quite too much for the constitution of a man who did not stop to consider that he was growing old, and finally resulted in serious and irreparable mischief.

Hardly had he entered upon his new command, when Washington proposed to him a sudden descent upon the enemy who were fortified at Kingsbridge; the letter written by the latter on the subject is full of interest, and lets the reader into the speculations of the great man's mind in those trying times. But the contradictory conduct of the enemy diverted his attention from this design, and drew it rather to the preservation of the important posts he still held. As soon, then, as the British encampment at Brunswick was broken up, Washington made ready to oppose their march upon Philadelphia, which he had reason to think was the direction of their next movement. In order to do this the more effectually, he sent for the whole of Putnam's force except a thousand men. These, with the militia of the region,

were thought to be sufficient to protect his position. Then it was reported to Gen. Putnam that Burgoyne was marching down upon him from the direction of Canada; and to provide against this, he was obliged to hold four regiments in readiness to march at a moment's warning. The great danger on the Hudson just then seemed to be, that Burgoyne from above and Howe from below would succeed in uniting their forces; and that was the plan which it was very evident they had for a long time entertained. Washington wrote him on the 1st of July thus: "No time is to be lost. Much may be at stake, and I am persuaded, if Gen. Howe is going up the river, he will make a rapid and vigorous push to gain the Highland passes."

For a long time matters were in a state of perplexing uncertainty. It required all the vigilance, and all the energy of a most skilful and prudent general, to guard properly against rashness on the one hand and negligence on the other. The season wore on in this way, and nothing of a decided character was undertaken during the summer. Putnam celebrated the first anniversary of the Declaration of Independence in the Highlands, in a rather novel style. A public feast was made, toasts were drunk, and patriotic feelings were appealed to. Guns were also fired in commemoration of so great an event, and

just at sundown a huge rock was thrown over a precipice with a crashing sound like that of thunder, into the wooded valley below. The rock had stood just on the edge of the precipice, and weighed several hundred tons.

At length Ticonderoga was abandoned* to the enemy; and then commenced in good earnest the march of the British downward upon the country around the Hudson. Putnam was ordered, on the receipt of the news, to forward a part of his force northward to the succor of Gen. Schuyler; and he also despatched Major Burr, who was still a member of his military staff, into Connecticut to collect recruits and send them on with all possible haste to Albany. Washington had by this time moved up nearer to the Hudson, on the Jersey side. Gen. Sullivan and Lord Stirling were sent over into Putnam's camp, to be ready to move either to the east or west, as circumstances should render it necessary. Howe had just then set sail from New York, and gone to sea, taking with him a large part of the force from had he gone? It might be to Philadelphia,—and it might be to Boston. And it was necessary to keep the city.† The anxious inquiry therefore was, Where

* The news of the evacuation of Ticonderoga reached Peekskill July 9, but Putnam refused to believe it until confirmations compelled him to do so.

† This force included 18,000 men and more than two hundred vessels.

the troops in readiness to repel his attack upon either place. Howe had sent a letter to Burgoyne by a young American, which he no doubt intended should fall into the hands of Gen. Putnam. The letter spoke of the fleet's being about to sail for "B——n," evidently meaning Boston. Washington got the letter from Putnam, and felt all the more sure that the whole was only meant to deceive him; he was confident now, that the enemy had sailed from New York for the purpose of taking Philadelphia. And he made ready to march with his forces at once in that direction.

The fleet made its appearance off the Delaware cape, sure enough, and Washington sent orders across the Hudson to Gen. Putnam to forward even more troops than was before arranged for, which now left his post in a very precarious condition. But on the very next day the troops were sent back again, the enemy having opened a new game by which to deceive the American Commander, and keep him in continual suspense. And in this way the sultry season was passed, the troops marching this way and that about the country, and wearying themselves down as much with the fatigue as they could have done in the same time with active and constant service.

It was early in the month of August that one Edmund Palmer, an officer in a company of Tories,

was caught within the American lines as a spy, and carried before Gen. Putnam. Sir Henry Clinton, who commanded at New York city, at once heard of Palmer's arrest, and sent a vessel up the river with the flag of truce, to demand his person as an officer in the English service. A boat landed from the vessel, a messenger leaped on shore, and came into the camp and delivered Clinton's message. Clinton threatened, if the spy was not given up, to visit the Americans with speedy vengeance. Putnam did not hesitate a moment, but sat down to his table, and instantly wrote the following reply to Clinton's haughty message:

"HEAD-QUARTERS, AUGUST 7, 1777.

"Edmund Palmer, an officer in the enemy's service, was taken as a *spy* lurking within our lines; he has been tried as a *spy*, condemned as a *spy*, and shall be executed as a *spy*, and the flag is ordered to depart immediately.

"ISRAEL PUTNAM."

"P. S. He has been accordingly executed."

The oak tree was standing not many years ago, at Peekskill, from one of the branches of which the Tory spy met his fate.*

* One exasperating result of the trials of this time was that the soldiers lost heart and began to desert. Putnam

Undoubtedly Clinton had sent out Palmer to obtain information respecting the strength of Putnam's position. This more than ever led to the belief that it was his intention to cut his way through the Highland passes, and join his forces with those of Burgoyne. General Putnam's camp was, as already mentioned, in the village of Peekskill, which is on the east side of the Hudson. On the western side, and a few miles above, were Forts Clinton and Montgomery, separated by a narrow stream, but forming substantially, however, a single fortification. They were planted on very high hills, inaccessible on the river side, and reported by those who selected the position to be almost impossible for an enemy to reach in their rear. General George Clinton, who was at the time Governor of New York, commanded them in person, having about six hundred of the militia of the State under him. Fort Independence was on the eastern side, some three miles below these, while Fort Constitution was built on an island near the same shore of the river, and about nine miles above

checked this movement by prompt and severe punishment. One deserter was hung and the following notice of warning was displayed:

"I wish that all who have any inclination to join our enemies from motives of fear, ambition, or avarice, would take warning by this example and avoid the dreadful calamities that will inevitably follow such vile and treasonable practices."

"ISRAEL PUTNAM."

Fort Independence. Putnam had command of the whole of this region, with its fortifications, and it was his single task to see that the British from below did not force a passage through, and thus unite with the army of Burgoyne which was working down from above.

At this time the General formed the bold design of making a sudden descent upon the British at Staten Island, Jersey City, York Island and Long Island. He was well informed of the enemy's strength at all these places, and felt sure of striking them a staggering blow. This design was to be carried out in the month of September. But Washington was obliged to draw away so large a part of his soldiery,* that for the present Putnam reluctantly gave over the execution of his plan.

* In his necessity, Putnam addressed to the "Colonels and other officers of the Army and Militia of Connecticut," a letter which, full as it is of the stirring spirit of patriotism, reads more like a popular speech than a military document. This letter, which is entirely characteristic of the man and the times, sets forth the depleted condition of his command, "which obliges me, for the common safety, to call upon all the officers and soldiers of the Continental troops and militia in the State of Connecticut, that have not special license to be absent, immediately to repair to this post, for the aid and defence thereof, and to defeat and crush our cruel and perfidious foes. And would we, my countrymen, for once lay aside our avarice, oppression, and evil works, for which the land mourns, and the inhabitants thereof are distressed and terrified, and united-

Sir Henry Clinton then took advantage of the existing state of affairs to send two thousand men, in four different divisions, into New Jersey, for the purpose of committing depredations. Washington was in the neighborhood of Philadelphia, and Putnam had not men enough to offer them any opposition; and thus the country lay entirely open to their ravages. The foraging parties succeeded in driving off large numbers of cattle, with which they returned in safety to New York. Putnam did send Gen. McDougall in pursuit of them, as soon as he heard of their conduct; but he reached the scene of the troubles too late to protect any part of the country from the effects of their thieving incursion.

On the 23d of September, Washington made a still larger draft on Putnam's force, which now reduced his command to something more than a thousand re-

ly exert ourselves like freemen, resolved on freedom, through the smiles of Heaven we should put a speedy end to those unnatural disturbers of our peace, and, with them, a period to this unhappy and bloody war, which now ravages and desolates our country, and threatens its inhabitants and its posterity with the most dismal ruin and abject slavery. Such casualties are incident to human affairs, the natural result of general national depravity; and are avoidable only by reformation and amendment in the public manners of a people.

"Awake, then, to virtue and to great military exertion, and we shall put a speedy and happy issue to this mighty contest."

"ISRAEL PUTNAM."

liable men. With these alone he was expected to hold his own position in the Highlands. The aid he looked for from the militia of the country round about amounted to hardly more than nothing.

Sir Henry Clinton was aware how greatly this force had been thus reduced, and resolved to take advantage of it. Accordingly he embarked with nearly four thousand troops on the river, and reached Tarrytown on the 5th of October. The reader will see what an excessive amount of exertion Putnam was now obliged to put forth, in order to hold the enemy in check and prevent the contemplated union of the army below with the army above. In the first place, all the troops he had would not number more than half what the British numbered; and these were divided up at four different points,—the two forts on the western bank of the river, and the two on the eastern. Besides, these, he must also keep his position at Peekskill. Clinton landed at Tarrytown, and marched up about five miles into the country. Tarrytown is on the same side of the river with Peekskill, where lay his camp.

The object of Clinton was merely to mislead the American general; for on the same night he quietly marched his men back to Tarrytown, and the next morning passed up the river again and landed at Verplanck's Point, which is only three miles below

Peekskill. Upon seeing their approach, Putnam fell back upon the heights in his rear, which he had fortified against such an emergency. It was then supposed, of course, that the British commander was directing his attack against Fort Independence, just above Putnam's camp; on the contrary, he had his eye fixed all the time on Forts Clinton and Montgomery, some six miles above Fort Independence, on the other side. On that same evening, therefore, the British fleet moved up nearer Peekskill; while a force of two thousand men dropped down the river, landed at Stony Point—which is over against Verplanck's Point,—and struck off through the mountainous country early the next morning to gain the rear of Forts Clinton and Montgomery. They were observed from the western side of the river, but a dense fog and the interposition of the mountains shut them out from view soon after, and no such suspicion existed as that they had a thought of making a circuit around the difficult hills of the country. Besides, their boats still appeared to be at Verplanck's Point, and their vessels were at Peekskill neck.

While this detachment of the enemy were thus pushing on to the rear of the fortresses in question, Putnam took a couple of general officers with him, and went down towards the river to reconnoitre. Those who had seen the enemy on the other side

at an early hour of the morning, supposed that they must have returned to their station at Verplanck's Point, inasmuch as nothing had since been seen of them. But by this time they were well on their way to the twin forts which they had resolved to assail. They were formed into two divisions; one advanced through the forests and ravines, surmounting the innumerable obstacles that lay in their way, intending to fall upon Fort Montgomery; the other, which Clinton himself conducted, hurried round to gain the rear of Fort Clinton. The plan was, to commence the assault at the same moment. At about two o'clock in the afternoon it began. This was on Monday. Several skirmishes had been had with the outposts before the two hostile parties reached the forts, but the Americans were driven back into the fortifications every time. For three hours the assault was kept up, with no abatement in its fury. It was like the dashing of a sudden and powerful storm. The British commander sent a flag, demanding a surrender, after the fight had been going on for a couple of hours; but as the Americans refused to yield, the attack was renewed with increased vigor. A messenger had been sent to Putnam's camp, in the meanwhile, to ask for assistance; but there was some treacherous conduct in the matter, and the message never was delivered at head-quarters. Putnam knew

nothing of what was going on, until he had started on his return from reconnoitring the enemy at Verplanck's Point; the firing up the river had been heard at Peekskill, and word was brought down with all possible despatch. He hurried back to camp and sent five hundred men up the river in great haste. They had five miles to march before they reached the point at which they were to cross, and by the time they came to that, the action was all over. The news came that the Americans were obliged to relinquish their position, and, under cover of dusk, they made good their retreat from the forts. The contest was most severe and bloody, more than one third of the Americans within the two forts having fallen victims.

It was midnight when Governor Clinton reached Peekskill in his retreat; and at a hasty conference of the superior officers, it was thought worse than useless to try to hold that post any longer. Putnam therefore ordered his men to march without any delay; and, the stores having been first withdrawn, they set out for Fishkill, some twelve miles distant by the road.* The two vessels were burned that had

* In addition to the public burdens that weighed heavily on Putnam, private and domestic ills accumulated at this time. His wife came to Peekskill to visit. With her came her son, Septimus Gardiner, a promising lad seventeen years of age, who was expecting to replace Aaron Burr on General Putnam's staff. The lad, to whom the general,

been stationed to defend the cable thrown across the river, lest they should fall into the enemy's hands. The British followed up their advantages without delay, destroying several buildings in and around Peekskill, sailing farther up the river and committing ravages at Esopus, a village just below Kingston on the western shore, burning stores, mills, and dwelling houses without the least compunction, and exhibiting traits of barbaric wantonness that would ill become outright savages. This conduct of itself aroused a feeling in that locality against the British, which tended more than anything to place still farther off their prospects of final success. These wanton and cruel acts were quite in keeping with their treatment of the wounded and dying Americans at Fort Montgomery. They bestowed upon their own dead, after the battle was over, a decent burial; but threw the bodies of the vanquished in piles into a pool not far from the fort, where they were left exposed to the elements. Dr. Dwight, who visited the place about seven months afterwards, in the month of May, de-

his step-father, was deeply attached, soon fell sick and died. Mrs. Putnam, whose health was not robust, was completely prostrated by this affliction. When the general withdrew from Peekskill the movement was additionally painful owing to the fact that his wife was unable to be moved. On the 14th day of October, she died. This accumulation of burden, disappointment, and sorrow, **made** the year one of sore trial to the brave old general,

scribes the scene that presented itself, in the following style:—

“The first object which met our eyes, after we had left our barge and ascended the bank, was the remains of a fire, kindled by the cottagers of this solitude, for the purpose of consuming the bones of some of the Americans who had fallen at this place, and had been left unburied. Some of these bones were lying, partially consumed, round the spot where the fire had been kindled; and some had evidently been converted to ashes. As we went onward, we were distressed by the fœtor of decayed human bodies. As we were attempting to discover the source from which it proceeded, we found, at a small distance from Fort Montgomery, a pond of a moderate size, in which we saw bodies of several men, who had been killed in the assault upon the fort. They were thrown into this pond, the preceding autumn, by the British, when, probably, the water was sufficiently deep to cover them. Some of them were covered at this time; but at a depth so small, as to leave them distinctly visible. Others had an arm, a leg, or a part of the body, above the surface. The clothes which they wore when they were killed, were still on them, and proved that they were militia, being the ordinary dress of farmers.”

The British were on their way up to meet Bur-

goyne, inflated with high hopes, and drunk with their grand expectations; but suddenly there fell a blow upon those hopes, which destroyed them every one. The news met them that Burgoyne had surrendered to General Gates! It was useless to go farther. They turned their faces about without hesitation, and, taking to their vessels in the river,—after having first been at the pains to demolish two of the deserted American forts,—sailed down to New York. Putnam left Fishkill upon this, and took up his former station at Peekskill. He had the great misfortune to lose his wife while at the former place, in reference to which General Washington soon afterwards wrote him,—“I am extremely sorry for the death of Mrs. Putnam, and sympathize with you upon the occasion. Remembering that all must die, and that she had lived to an honorable age, I hope you will bear the misfortune with that fortitude and complacency of mind that become a man and a Christian.”

It is said that Dr. Dwight then an army chaplain, and afterwards President of Yale College,—preached a sermon to the army on the Sunday following the surrender of Burgoyne, taking his text from Joel, 2: 20, as follows:—“I will remove far off from you the northern army.” All the officers were delighted with it, and General Putnam as a matter

of course. The General walked along with the young chaplain, after service was over, and desired to know where he got his text; "for," said he, "I don't believe there is any such text in the Bible." Dwight only satisfied him that there *was* such a text there, by producing the book and pointing it out to him. Putnam declared that there was *everything* in that book, and Dwight knew just where to put his finger upon it!

After Burgoyne's defeat, drafts were made upon the northern army to increase the force of General Putnam, until in a short time he had nine thousand men under his command. With this large body at his disposal, he had planned an enterprise against the enemy below at several points, of whose success he was very sanguine. But the British under General Howe were already in possession of Philadelphia, and their fleet was seeking a communication with that city to carry them supplies. To this plan Washington wished to put a stop. For this purpose he sent Col. Alexander Hamilton to Putnam's camp, with orders to forward him without delay, three brigades. Hamilton then hurried on to Albany to confer with General Gates. In a week he returned; and finding that Putnam had not forwarded the troops as directed, sent an order couched in terms of the most severe

reprimand.* He also wrote a despatch to Washington in relation to Putnam's neglect of his orders, in which he expressed the opinion that the old General ought to be displaced. His language, in the letter he addressed to General Putnam, was harsh in the

* It is impossible to apologize for General Putnam who here disobeyed the orders of his chief. Had the army been more perfectly trained, such a thing could not have occurred. One of the greatest difficulties that met Washington—and all the generals of that war, including Putnam—was that of commanding an army of men who were trained to individual independence, and not to military obedience. These men, in large measure, served when they chose, and quit the service when they chose. The generals themselves were not free from such individualistic ideas of duty and privileges, and it required much diplomacy to hold the army together at all. Surely never was an army further from the condition of mechanical precision, which is the ideal of military perfection.

If one desires to palliate Putnam's offence, these two facts may be considered: (1) Putnam, who was nothing if not a fighter, now, for the first time in many months, had the means of offensive operation. He had fully planned attacks on New York and vicinity. After his long experience of being monotonously on the defensive, this change of conditions was like putting new life into his veins. The sudden order withdrawing his reinforcements, and dashing his expectation of brilliant exploits, was like the relapse of a patient recovering from a fever. He failed to bear the strain with military submissiveness. (2) It must also be remembered that Hamilton, brilliant as he was, was very young and unbearably imperious. He was just the person to make a disagreeable order many times more disagreeable than was necessary; and the haughty manner of the stripping in communicating this order, was nicely calculated to rouse all the antagonism of Putnam's rugged nature.

extreme. Yet he excuses it on account of the depth of his feelings. He said that he trembled lest Sir Henry Clinton with his fleet had already reached Howe at Philadelphia, and that all was lost.

Putnam at once sent Hamilton's letter on to the Commander-in-chief, and complained of its temper and imputations upon him; he said that without the most direct and positive orders from his commander, he could not think of such a thing as sending away the body of the force which was all he had to rely upon. But Washington approved the order which had been issued to the General and expressed himself dissatisfied with his neglect to obey the same. For the first time since he had entered upon the duties of a soldier, had he thus received the censure, whether deserved or not, of his superior officer. There is much to be said in explanation of his conduct, and to say that does but divide the responsibility among those on whom it should properly rest. Washington was unacquainted with the exact state of matters in the highlands, just at that time; there was a mutinous spirit among a large portion of the troops, who threatened to desert altogether unless they could be paid; and this Hamilton himself knew; and Hamilton was evidently hasty, if not impetuous, and used language, for a young man of twenty, in his letter,

such as no man of his years should employ towards a scarred veteran of sixty.

The order of Washington having finally been complied with, General Putnam took a part of his remaining force and moved down the river. General Dickinson made a sudden descent on Staten Island, on the 27th of November, with fourteen hundred men; and simultaneously with this movement General Putnam ordered a diversion upon Kingsbridge, that the enemy might not suspect his stratagem; but by some means they received intelligence of his design, and were enabled to make good their escape.

Next he proceeded to New Rochelle, and at this point got things in readiness to cross the Sound in open boats and surprise the enemy at Huntington and Satauket; but this design was penetrated by the British in time to permit them to vacate the forts and betake themselves to a place of safety. Then he projected an enterprise against Long Island to destroy large quantities of lumber that had been collected at several points by the British, for constructing barracks in New York,—to fire several coasting vessels that were loaded with wood for the British army then in possession of Newport, in Rhode Island,—to capture what public stores they could lay their hands on, and to attack a regiment stationed near Jamaica. The whole expedition was divided into three parts,

and placed under the direction of as many commanders. This expedition also turned out unfortunately, only one sloop having been destroyed, together with a quantity of timber. One of the commanders was taken a prisoner, together with the whole of his party, amounting to sixty-five men.

Governor Tryon, whose talent seemed to consist in destroying, and whose name will forever be associated in the mind of the people of western Connecticut with acts of incendiarism and wantonness, had been sending out parties quite freely to commit such depredations as they had an inclination to. Putnam found that the only way to put a stop to this conduct, was by acts of retaliation. Accordingly he despatched bodies of men in this direction and that, wherever it was possible to surprise the enemy's officers in their position. On one of these marauding excursions the Americans having learned that a noted Tory named Colonel James Delancy was at the village of West Farms, a little below Westchester, they stealthily approached and surrounded the house in the night, and then hurried in to ransack it for their prisoner. Delancy was in bed, and heard them coming. Not knowing what else to do, he bounded out and crept underneath with all possible agility. But the warm bed he had just left testified to his presence; and after searching carefully all about the room, they at last

discovered him in his novel hiding place, and proceeded to draw him forth in triumph to public view. It was not a very dignified or brave position for a Colonel to be found in, but there he was. They bore him away to head-quarters a prisoner. Clinton found the means to procure his release before long, by proposing an exchange of prisoners. He afterwards earned a name of perpetual infamy, by placing himself at the head of those thieving and lawless barbarians known by the name of Cow Boys, that infested the neutral district between the lines of the two armies. The novelist Cooper has done full justice to the vile character of those uncivilized creatures, who lived by preying even on their own friends and relatives, in his novel entitled "The Spy." They formed a class of men, the like of whom it would be impossible to find anywhere else in all our history as a country.*

* In some cases Putnam summarily checked these depredations by retaliation in kind. His scouts burned residences of Tories, some of these being valuable mansions. Thus applying to the practice of incendiarism the rule that worked both ways, he succeeded in bringing such ruffian methods into disrepute.

CHAPTER XII.

PUTNAM AT WEST POINT AND DANBURY.

IN the middle of December, Gen. Putnam went into winter quarters in the Highlands. The work to which he was now to give his attention, was the perfection of the defences of the river. It was early in the month of January, 1778, when a party, among whom were Governor George Clinton and Colonel Radière, a French engineer, made an actual survey of the region, for the purpose of deciding the best point at which a strong fortification should be erected. West Point was finally decided on, though not without the opposition of Radière, and after an examination of the place by a committee of the New York Legislature. The French engineer displayed considerable petulance at the final decision, and it was not long before he gave place to the celebrated Polish exile Kosciusko; when the plans were carried forward with energy and rapidity. To Gen. Putnam alone his early friend and biographer, Col. Humphreys, awards the credit of this most sagacious selection. General Parsons was sent across the river to break

ground when the snow lay two feet deep. Considering how poorly fed and clad the soldiers were at this time, how pinching was the cold, and what a miserable pittance was doled out to them from time to time for their services, it seems truly wonderful what kept them together at all, much more, what motive could be strong enough to excite their energies in such an undertaking at such an inclement season. Putnam's own description of the condition of his men, in one of his letters to Washington, is well worth quoting from: "Dublois' regiment is unfit to be ordered on duty, there being not one blanket in the regiment. Very few have either a shoe or a shirt, and most of them have neither stockings, breeches, nor overalls. Several companies of enlisted artificers are in the same situation, and unable to work in the field." This was the same long and dreary winter which Washington passed with his shoeless and almost starving army at Valley Forge. It was, in truth, the darkest period in our Revolutionary history. Washington wrote to Congress that he had with him at Valley Forge "no less than two thousand eight hundred and ninety-eight men in camp unfit for duty, because they were *barefoot and otherwise naked.*"

In the month of November previous, Congress had directed that the loss of the Forts Clinton and Mont-

gomery should be duly investigated by a court of inquiry, which was composed of three of the leading officers of the army.* Putnam had gone home to Connecticut, about the middle of February, to take care of his private affairs, which sadly needed his personal attention; but as soon as he returned the investigation took place. It is a very common method, according to strict military discipline, of getting at the real facts of a great mistake or misfortune, or of a piece of misconduct on the part of a general officer; but nothing in the present case was charged against Gen. Putnam by the court, nor against any one else concerned. Of course, while the investigation was going on, Gen. Putnam was deposed from his command, as was customary and proper; and that command he was not permitted again to resume. The court found that the two forts were lost on account of a lack of men, and not from any fault of the commanders. Washington sent to Putnam, upon this, directions to return once more to Connecticut, and hurry forward the fresh troops which that State proposed to raise for the coming campaign,—that of the year 1778.

The news came about the first of May, that France had formed an alliance with the United States, and Washington and all the rest began to feel greatly

* These were McDougall, Huntington, and Wigglesworth,

encouraged. He even thought that the campaign of that year would terminate the struggle altogether. He wrote on to Putnam, "I hope that the fair, and, I may say, *certain*, prospect of success will not induce us to relax."

Directly after the battle of Monmouth, Gen. Putnam left Connecticut to take command of the right wing of the army.* Nothing had yet been accomplished, with the exception of this single brilliant

* Among the people of New York there had been for some time a growing dissatisfaction with Putnam, and this was not removed by the favorable verdict of the court-martial. Nor did Washington recover entire confidence in him after the disobedience of the orders given through Hamilton, as narrated above. Putnam, after the death of his wife, asked for permission to return to his home in order to settle up some matters, and Washington consented, regarding this as a convenient method of solving an embarrassing situation. Putnam was ordered to raise recruits for the army in Connecticut. When this work was finished, he was impatient to be assigned to active duty. He wrote in a complaining tone to Congress, that "to be posted here as a public spectator for every ill-minded person to make their remarks upon, I think is very poor encouragement for any person to venture their lives and fortunes in the service."

The battle of Monmouth was fought June 18, 1778. This resulted in a brilliant victory, the fruits of which were lost by the disobedience of General Lee, who ranked next to Washington. Lee was court-martialed and dismissed from the service. Thus a suitable opening was found for Putnam, and thus it came that he was appointed to succeed Lee. He probably never knew to what extent he was, for the time, a white elephant on Washington's hands.

action, and the summer wore away with a series of aimless marches this way and that, which almost wore out what patience remained to the army. The British at length—in September—gave the American Commander the idea that they were about to embark from New York on an expedition to Boston. As France had by that time openly taken sides with us, a large French fleet lay near Boston and along the coast, which it was thought Sir Henry Clinton was eager to attack. The entire eastern army was therefore so disposed as to be ready to go to the immediate aid of the East, in case of an invasion, and also to hold and defend the important posts already in their hands, in and around the Highlands. Putnam was put in command of two brigades not far from West Point, while Generals McDougall and Gates were stationed at Danbury, to protect the line of country bordering on Long Island Sound. Two months passed by, and still nothing was done. The army was therefore ordered into winter quarters early in the month of November.

General Putnam was ordered, this winter, to quarter with his command near Danbury. He had three brigades under him, made up of troops from Connecticut and New Hampshire, Hazen's corps of infantry, and Sheldon's corps of cavalry. In this position he was ready at hand to assist either in the defences of

the Highlands, or to repel any assaults that might be offered by parties of the enemy upon the magazines along the Connecticut river, or the dwellings and stores on the line of the Sound shore.

The troops were but poorly paid at this time, and there was a great deal of complaint amongst them. Nor was it without reason. They saw the day of payment no nearer at hand than it had ever been. They were put off, and put off, with promises continually. It was cold weather, pinching and bitter; and poorly clad and ill fed as they were, their prospects brightening at no turn, it is nothing to wonder at that they should begin to feel discouraged. The first evidence which Gen. Putnam had of the existence of such a feeling, was on finding that insubordination was actually beginning to manifest itself. The old General himself quartered at a farm house in Reading, but a short distance from Danbury, and he was there when the news of the outbreak first reached him.

The General Assembly of Connecticut was in session at the time, in Hartford; and the troops had, two brigades of them, resolved to form in military line and march to Hartford to *demand* the money which they began to think was wrongfully kept back from them. These two brigades were Connecticut troops, and had a perfect right to demand their pay from the legislature of that State. The other troops

did not stand in the same relation to the legislature. When word was brought to Gen. Putnam of the breaking out of the trouble, one brigade was then under arms and all ready to proceed to Hartford. He lost no time in making up his mind what to do, as he never did; but instantly springing upon his horse, he galloped away to the scene of the difficulties. Riding up to the head of the column, he at once appealed to their respect and affection for their veteran commander, and harangued them in a loud voice and with a great deal of feeling. Said he to them, while he still sat on his horse,—“My brave lads, whither are you going? Do you intend to desert your officers, and to invite the enemy to follow you into the country? In whose cause have you been fighting and suffering so long? Is it not your own? Have you no property? no parents? no wives? no children? You have thus far behaved like men; the world is full of your praises; and posterity will stand astonished at your deeds:—but not if you spoil it all at last. Don’t you consider how much the country is distressed by the war, and that your officers have not been any better paid than yourselves? But we all expect better times, and then the country will do us ample justice. Let us all stand by one another, then, and fight it out like brave soldiers!

Think what a shame it would be for Connecticut men to run away from their officers!"

An appeal like this, coming from the man they all loved and respected so much, could not go without its effect. The dissatisfied troops softened in a moment, and testified to their suddenly changed feelings by offering the customary military salute as their General rode slowly down the line; they presented arms, and the drum began again to beat. The Brigade Major then gave the order to shoulder arms, which they promptly obeyed; and then marched away to their parade ground and stacked their arms without the least show of further dissatisfaction. The rough but honest old soldier who was at their head, exerted such a strong and immediate influence over them, that they were convinced that he was in the right, and they were altogether in the wrong.

One soldier only, who was engaged in the mutiny, persisted in his insubordination, and it was found necessary to confine him in the guard-house. During the night he attempted to make his escape, but he was shot dead by the sentinel, who had himself been concerned in the mutiny of the day before. A couple of soldiers were also executed on Gallows Hill, about a mile from the head-quarters of Putnam; one was shot for desertion, and one was hung for being taken as a spy. The latter was a Tory. He was compelled

to ascend a ladder to a height of some twenty feet, with the rope around his neck, and then told to jump off. This he refused to do. The ladder had to be turned over by those below, so as to throw him off and leave him swinging in the air. The other—the deserter—was a mere youth, not more than seventeen years old; and it is related that terrible work was made at his execution.

The enemy, this winter, under the well known Governor Tryon, made a descent upon the towns and villages along the Sound, carrying their incursions also as far into the interior as they judged it prudent to go. They laid waste and destroyed wherever they went. They set fire to public buildings and private dwellings with perfect impunity, and witnessed the devastations they created with evident satisfaction.

Tryon marched with a detachment of fifteen hundred men from Kingsbridge over to Horseneck, or what is now known as West Greenwich. This place was so called, because it was a tongue or neck of land, running out into the Sound; and upon it used to feed large quantities of horses, in the summer season. Gen. Putnam was there at Horseneck himself, with a small force of only a hundred and fifty men to oppose the advancing enemy. He was stationed on the brow of a steep hill, and had but two iron cannon with him, but without drag-ropes or horses.

He determined, however, to show to the enemy that he would not run as long as there was a chance to harass them, or do them any mischief.*

The field-pieces were loaded and fired several times at them, as they came up, performing considerable execution. Resolved to put a stop to such a proceeding at once, the British General ordered a party of dragoons, supported by the infantry, to charge upon the cause of the mischief. Seeing what they were determined to do, and feeling certain that there was no use in trying to oppose his little handful of men to the large body of the enemy at hand, Gen. Putnam told his soldiers to retreat at the top of their speed into a swamp near by, where cavalry could not enter to molest them. He then waited himself till the men had all got off safely, and when the dragoons had come almost within a sword's length of him in their impetuous chase, he took a mad plunge down the precipice; while their horses recoiled, and the riders looked on with a feeling of astonishment that almost

* General Tryon certainly succeeded in surprising Putnam. There are varying accounts as to where and how Putnam received the first intimation of the presence of the enemy, but all agree that he was taken suddenly and unawares. One story has it that he was in the act of shaving when he saw in the looking glass the reflection of the British red coats. Certain it is that he did not stop for appearances. His own command numbered but one hundred and fifty, while Tryon had fifteen hundred men.



Putnam taking his mad plunge down the precipice to escape the British.
Page 244. *Life of Israel Putnam.*

amounted to horror. They dared not continue the pursuit, so fearfully precipitous was the descent over the rocks and stones. It was a feat of reckless daring, especially for a man well along in years, that was quite worthy of one, who, in his younger days, went down alone into a cave after a hunted wolf at midnight.*

The road led round the hill; but he was far beyond their reach before they could recover themselves sufficiently to set out after him by that way. They hastily sent a volley of bullets in pursuit of him, as

* An anonymous writer in *The Outlook*, July 14, 1900, gives the story of that ride as he heard it from the four sisters who, as little girls, remembered it with great vividness and in their old age were fond of narrating it to succeeding generations:

"On that day in February, 1778, a busy mother in a typical New England farm-house, while in her milk-room, heard the rapid beat of horse hoofs coming down the road, or, to use a colloquialism, 'across the plain.' So fast was the horse coming that the mother hastened round the house to see where her little daughters were. The hatless horseman drew his horse up so suddenly in front of the house as to pull him back on his haunches, exclaiming at the moment, 'For God's sake, take your children in. The damned British are upon us.' And like a vision horse and rider were out of sight.

"These four sisters all agree that the General was without a hat when he spoke to their mother, and they all remembered his long hair blowing about his round, kindly face; they felt the spirit of friendliness that led him to pause and warn their mother of the danger close upon her, and to them he seemed like a personal friend."

he plunged down the rocky steep; one of them went through his hat, but not a hair of his head was injured. There were from seventy-five to one hundred rude stone steps laid on this declivity, to assist the people from below in climbing the hill to the ordinary services on Sunday, at the church on the brow of the same. Putnam's horse took him in a zigzag direction down these steps, and landed him safely in the plain. A man who stood not far from the old General, just as he wheeled his horse and made the reckless plunge, said that he was cursing the British terribly.

He scoured the road at the top of his speed, and reached Stamford, a town about five miles distant, in a very short time. He then collected the few militia who were posted there, and, being joined also by some of his own men who had just escaped, turned back to pursue and harass the enemy. The latter had by this time succeeded in committing many acts of destruction, and were even then on their retreat to Rye. Putnam hung upon their rear, and succeeded in taking thirty-eight prisoners, and a wagon-load of ammunition and plunder which they were carrying off, and which he afterwards restored to their rightful owners. On the next day, he sent the prisoners all back to the British lines, under an escort, for the purpose of exchanging them with American

prisoners. Gov. Tryon was so much pleased with his humanity and generosity, that he sent him back a suit of new clothes, including a hat to take the place of the one which had been perforated with the bullet.

As the Spring opened, the army moved up into the Highlands again, concentrating itself there on account of the demonstrations of Sir Henry Clinton. It was plainly the intention of the latter to possess himself of West Point and the river. Gen. Putnam held command at the Clove, on the west side of the river. The British ascended in their vessels, and captured Stony Point; and on the 15th of July it was recaptured again by that daring spirit who led on a "forlorn hope" in the darkness and storm of the night, Anthony Wayne, or "Mad Anthony"—as he was called by the army.* But the Americans had to abandon it finally, and afterwards the British aban-

* "Wayne was born in Chester County, Pennsylvania, in 1745. He received a good education for the time, and became a land-surveyor. During the troublous times of 1774 and 1775, Wayne devoted himself to drilling military companies in his own county. He entered the army as colonel in 1776, and distinguished himself in many actions. His most notable exploit, perhaps, was the storming of Stony Point on the Hudson. This formidable work he carried at midnight by a bayonet-charge, the soldiers' guns being empty. He afterward handled a small force in Georgia in such a way as to hold in check a much larger body of British troops. It was his careful organization and bold execution of various enterprises during the Revolution which caused his selection by Washington to re-

doned it still again. Washington removed his headquarters to West Point, late in July, and Putnam took his post at Buttermilk Falls, some two miles below. The season was passed chiefly in strengthening the defences of this famous post, to which Putnam was no small contributor. The year went by without a single action of any greater importance than that renowned one of Wayne against the fortress of Stony Point.

trieve the fortunes of the Indian war after St. Clair's defeat."—Edward Eggleston.

Wayne led the expedition against the Indians in 1794. They called him *The-Chief-Who-Never-Sleeps*. The common nickname, "Mad Anthony Wayne," was given him on account of his great courage and valor during the war of the Revolution, but it must not be inferred that he lacked prudence. It was this quality which won from the Indians the name quoted above, as well as that of *The-Black-Snake*, which they also called him. He died in 1796.

CHAPTER XIII.

HIS LAST DAYS.

EARLY in December, the American army went into winter quarters at Morristown. There was no expedition on foot just then by the enemy, which required them to be late in the field. They had occupied themselves chiefly in destructive excursions into the country, burning and laying waste wherever they went. Washington himself spoke of their operations, in a letter to Lafayette, as amounting to little more than burning defenceless towns within reach of their own shipping, "where little else was, or could be opposed to them, than the cries of distressed women and helpless children."

Pretty soon after going into winter quarters, Gen. Putnam left the camp for an absence of a few weeks to visit his family in Connecticut. Towards the last of the month he started on his return, taking Hartford in his route, as usual. He had travelled on the road to Hartford, however, but a few miles, when he was greatly surprised to find that a sensation of numbness was creeping over his right arm and leg. Unwilling to think that it could proceed from any other cause than the cold, he made strenuous exertions to shake it off; but he soon found that it was

impossible for him to deceive himself. The numbness increased, until it had got strong hold upon the limbs and one side of his person. He was obliged to be removed to the house of a friend, and even then he fought with all the native vigor of his will against the unpleasant truth that was forcing itself upon his mind. But it was to no purpose. The old gentleman found he had been visited with a severe shock of paralysis, and it was useless to try to deny it any longer.

Henceforward, he must relinquish his active connection with the war of the American Revolution. It was a difficult matter for him to feel resigned to inactivity, after having thrown himself with such ardor into the cause of his country; but he used his stock of philosophy, and, as he always did in times of trial and difficulty, resolved to make the best of it. For the rest of his days, therefore, he must consent, as it were, to lie on the shelf. He must hear the roar of the cannon, but take no part in the battle. It was a stern fatality, and one well calculated to make the soul of any hero feel impatient.

For more than eleven years he was consigned to the retirement and quiet of his farm-life in Pomfret, at the expiration of which time his days drew to an end. He had not entirely lost the use of his limbs, yet their strength and vigor was so seriously im-

paired as to put physical labor out of the question. He did not relax any of his early interest in the details of farming, but, with his sons, carried on his agricultural labors with his usual success. There was one time,—about six months after his attack of paralysis,—when he entertained the strongest hopes of being able to rejoin the army; and a letter from Gen. Washington in reply to one of his own upon this subject, is to be seen now. But these hopes all proved to be futile and vain.*

No man was a better companion than Israel Putnam, even after his misfortune from the assault of disease. He was the life of every social circle of

* These letters are here given in full:

POMFRET, 29 May, 1780.

“DEAR SIR,—I cannot forbear informing your Excellency, by the return of Major Humphreys to camp, of the state of my health from the first of my illness to the present time. After I was prevented from coming on to the army by a stroke of the paralytic kind, which deprived me, in a great measure, of the use of my right leg and arm, I retired to my plantation and have been gradually growing better ever since. I have now so far gained the use of my limbs, especially of my leg, as to be able to walk with very little impediment, and to ride on horseback tolerably well. In other respects I am in perfect health, and enjoy the comforts and pleasures of life with as good relish as most of my neighbors.

“Although I should not be able to resume a command in the army, I propose to myself the happiness of making a visit, and seeing my friends there some time in the course of the campaign. And, however incapable I may

which he formed a part, and as popular with all his friends as any man could reasonably wish to be considered. He loved his joke as well as anybody; and lost few opportunities of having it, even at the expense of his best friend. He was nowise indifferent to the pleasures of the table, but could always tell a good piece of meat, from the first taste of it. One of his descendants told the writer that "he could

be of serving my country, to my latest hour my wishes and prayers will always be most ardent and sincere for its happiness and freedom. As a principal instrument in the hand of Providence for effecting this, may Heaven long preserve your Excellency's most important and valuable life.

"Not being able to hold the pen in my own hand, I am obliged to make use of another to express with how much regard and esteem, I am, your Excellency's

"Most obedient and very humble servant,

"ISRAEL PUTNAM."

"P. S. I am making a great effort to use my hand to make the initials of my name for the first time.

"I. P."

HEAD-QUARTERS, 5 July, 1780.

"DEAR SIR,—I am very happy to learn from your letter of the 29th, handed me by Major Humphreys, that the present state of your health is so flattering, and that it promises you the prospect of being in a condition to make a visit to your old associates some time this campaign. I wish it were in my power to congratulate you on a complete recovery. I should feel a sincere satisfaction in such an event, and I hope for it heartily, with the rest of your friends in this quarter.

"I am, dear Sir, etc.,

"G. WASHINGTON."

play the knife and fork as briskly as a drummer could his drumsticks." In all respects, Israel Putnam was a *hearty* man. It was this very quality that made him so sincere, so honest, so devoted, and so brave. Such a man could have no half-way opinions; and what he honestly thought, that he never hesitated to speak boldly out. To the very last day of his existence, he retained the possession of all these marked traits of character, together with the customary brightness and vigor of his mental faculties. He made friends wherever he went; and he understood the secret—if it is a secret—of keeping them. The same habits of activity that had characterized him from his youth up, assisted to preserve his health as long as it was preserved to him; and only a few weeks before the final summons came to call him away, he performed a journey on horseback to Danvers, his birthplace, a distance of a hundred miles. But he travelled slowly, resting as often as was necessary along the road.

Immediately upon the conclusion of the Treaty of Peace between the United States and Great Britain, by the terms of which the former were declared to be free and independent States, Washington addressed a letter to the war-worn hero in his retirement, in which he said that "among the many worthy and meritorious officers with whom he had had the happi-

ness to be connected in service through the war, and from whose cheerful assistance and advice he had received much support and confidence, *the name of a Putnam is not forgotten*; nor will be, but with that stroke of time which shall obliterate from my mind the remembrance of all those toils and fatigues through which we have struggled, for the preservation and establishment of the Rights, Liberties, and Independence of our Country.”

Many anecdotes are related of Gen. Putnam, some of which have a foundation in truth, while more, probably, take their rise only in the imaginations of those who gave them the first start in the world. Among them all, however, there is one which is quite good enough, old as it may be to many, to reproduce in this biography. A certain English officer, who was a prisoner on his parole, or word of honor, took mortal offence at some sharp remarks in which the General had indulged respecting the British, and challenged him, thinking this the easiest way to take satisfaction and correct the General's candid opinion at the same time. Putnam accepted his braggart challenge without any hesitation, and proposed to meet him in the following way:—On the next morning, they were both to be at a certain place by a specified hour, and Putnam, who was the challenged party, and of course had choice of them, was to provide the weap-



Putnam's method of fighting a duel with an English officer.—Page 254.
Life of Israel Putnam.

ons. When the English officer arrived at the place agreed upon, he found Putnam seated on a bench, on which stood close beside him a keg of what was, to appearance, *powder*. A hole was bored into the head, and a match had been thrust into the hole, all ready to be lighted. Putnam removed his pipe from his mouth, and told the Englishman to sit down on the bench on the other side of the keg. As soon as the latter had complied, Putnam lit the match by his pipe, and began to smoke again with as much unconcern as if there was no possible danger. His opponent sat and watched the burning of the match as long as he could, and then began to grow nervous. The moment the fire came near to the few grains of powder that lay scattered about on the head of the barrel, the officer sprang up in great haste and ran off at the top of his speed!

“ You are just as brave a man as I thought you was! ” exclaimed the triumphant Putnam. “ This is only a keg of *onions*, with a little powder sprinkled over its head, to try your pluck! I see you don’t like the smell! ” *

He had the laugh against the Englishman, who never forgave him for the mock test to which he thus publicly put his personal courage.

* The sense of humor, which enables a person who is conscientiously opposed to the practice of dueling, to turn it into a joke and laugh it out of court, is a valuable trait.

It is not necessary, after giving this connected narrative of the life and services of a man like Israel Putnam, to set about the task of summing up those qualities of his character which every reader has observed for himself in passing along. It affords one sincere pleasure, however, to know that his early habits of industry and thrift had placed him beyond the reach of want in his old age, which unhappily the reach of want in his old age, which unhappily could not be said of many others of that band of patriots to whose sacrifices we owe what we enjoy so

The reader will recall the fact that Abraham Lincoln was once, for some real or fancied slight, challenged to a duel by James Shields. Lincoln was of exceptionally large physique and bubbled over with good nature, while Shields was a small man and noted for his explosive temper. Lincoln, having the choice of weapons, emphasized the physical disparity by choosing cavalry swords of the largest size. Shields did not perceive the humor of this, and both parties repaired to the "bloody sands" where, however, the disagreement was amicably settled. The details of the settlement were not divulged. Shields afterwards became a general in the United States army, where he rendered brave and efficient service, and when the war was over he was elected several times, from different States, to the United States Senate. Had Lincoln fought the duel in earnest, it is probable that the country would have lost the services of at least one patriot.

By way of contrast, the country has not forgotten the duel in which Aaron Burr shot Alexander Hamilton to death. The latter was conscientiously opposed to dueling, but he dared not face public opinion by declining. Putnam's method of dealing with the difficult subject was far better.

freely to-day. He had as pleasant a home as a man could desire; his large family, already grown up and settled around him, found the same happiness in his society that he did in theirs; and, blessed in all things, at peace with the world, and with a soul full of tranquillity, he came to his end at last like a shock of corn that is ripe in its season.

Two days before his death, he was violently attacked with an inflammatory disorder, which obstinately refused to yield to the ordinary remedies of medicine; and on the 19th day of May, in the year 1790, he passed away peacefully and quietly, having reached the seventy-third year of an honorable age. His neighbors bore him to the grave with every manifestation of sincere sorrow for his loss; and the news of his death was received with feelings of unmingled grief all over the country. Thus did he live for seven full years to witness and participate in the happiness of the country whose independence he had assisted to achieve, and it gave him lasting joy to know that the part he had taken in the struggle was not a hesitating or an inconsiderable one. Dr. Whitney, his old pastor, preached a discourse appropriate to his death, from which the following paragraph is an interesting extract:

“He was eminently a person of public spirit, an unshaken friend of liberty, and was proof against

attempts to induce him to betray and desert his country. The baits to do so were rejected with the utmost abhorrence. He was of a kind, benevolent disposition; pitiful to the distressed, charitable to the needy, and ready to assist all who wanted his help. In his family he was the tender, affectionate husband, the provident father, an example of industry and close application to business. He was a constant attendant upon the public worship of God, from his youth up. He brought his family with him, when he came to worship the Lord. He was not ashamed of family religion. His house was a house of prayer. For many years, he was a professor of religion. In the last years of his life, he often expressed a great regard for God, and the things of God. There is one, at least, to whom he freely disclosed the workings of his mind; his conviction of sin; his grief for it; his dependence on God, through the Redeemer, for pardon; and his hope of a happy future existence, whenever his strength and heart should fail him. This one makes mention of these things, for the satisfaction and comfort of his children and friends; and can add, that, being with the General a little before he died, he asked him whether his hope of future happiness, as formerly expressed, now attended him. His answer was in the affirmative; with a declaration

of his resignation to the will of God, and his willingness even then to die.”

He left a large family, whose descendants live to honor the name of their ancestor in all parts of our common country. The various relics which bring up his personal connection with the French and Indian, and the Revolutionary War, are preserved with sacred solicitude. Among these are the pistols of Major Pitcairn, with one of which the latter opened the Revolution on Lexington Green.

The dust of the old Hero lies in the little burying-ground of the village of Brooklyn,—which village was once a part of Pomfret,—and there mingles peacefully with the soil. The tomb,—a brick structure, upon which rests a weather-browned slab,—is fast going to decay, and sacrilegious hands have chipped off pieces of the marble slab to carry away as trifling memorials. The State of Connecticut, however, has pledged herself to aid generously in the erection of a suitable monument, to be placed upon the open green of the village, where all who pass may be reminded of the man whose labors and sacrifices brought them so priceless a legacy.* Upon the

* The State has handsomely redeemed this pledge, and to-day a fine equestrian statue, representing the general as urging his men forward, apparently in battle, stands on the Green in the town of Brooklyn. Another statue, representing Putnam in the military costume of Revolu-

present fast-fading slab that crowns the dilapidated vault,* is to be traced the following feeling and highly appropriate inscription, from the pen of his friend and companion in the army, Dr. Dwight, President of Yale College:

SACRED BE THIS MONUMENT,
to the memory
of
ISRAEL PUTNAM, ESQUIRE,
Senior Major-General in the armies
of
the United States of America,
who
was born at Salem,
in the Province of Massachusetts,
on the 7th day of January,
A. D. 1718,
and died
on the twenty-ninth day of May,
A. D. 1790.

PASSENGER,
if thou art a soldier,
drop a tear over the dust of a Hero,
who
ever attentive
to the lives and happiness of his men,

tionary times, adorns the beautiful Bushnell Park, of the city of Hartford. It was erected by the munificence of a private citizen.

* A century of New England storms and sunshine wore upon that plain slab and threatened to destroy the interesting inscription. Accordingly the slab was reverently removed to Hartford, where it is now kept in the corridor of the Capitol, accessible to all comers.

dared to lead
where any dared to follow;
if a Patriot,
remember the distinguished and gallant services
rendered thy country
by the Patriot who sleeps beneath this marble;
if thou art honest, generous and worthy,
render a cheerful tribute of respect
to a man,
whose generosity was singular,
whose honesty was proverbial;
who
raised himself to universal esteem,
and offices of eminent distinction,
by personal worth
and a
useful life.

The brave old man, who never knew the meaning of fear, sleeps quietly in this humble grave. A devious path has been worn among the hillocks of the little yard, by the feet of those who have come, year after year, to look upon his last resting place. On the still summer afternoons, the crickets chirp mournfully in the long wild grass, and the southerly breeze wails in the belt of pines that neighbor upon the spot. The associations are all of a thoughtful sadness. But it is good for one to visit the graves of the heroes who have departed, where he may kindle anew that sentiment of patriotism, without which he can become neither an estimable citizen nor a noble man.

THE END.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONCLUSION.

It may be of some interest to the reader to give, in concluding this work, a summary of what has been learned of the subject of the biography, and particularly an estimate of his character. His physical aspect is described by L. Grosvenor, one of his descendants, in the following words:—

“Putnam, in personal appearance, was of medium height, of a strong, athletic figure, and in the time of the revolutionary war, rather fleshy, weighing 200 lbs. His hair was dark, his eyes light blue, his complexion a florid Saxon, and his broad, good-humored face, marked with deep scars, received in his encounters with the French and Indians. A portrait of him, taken in his younger days, when he was a provincial major, gives a rather slim but muscular figure, drest in scarlet coat and breeches and a light blue vest, with buff gloves and black cravat. He is described by those now living, who frequently saw him in his old age, as being very large around

the chest, showing—what we should expect from his habits—a great amount of sanguine vital temperament. Even after his final return from the wars, when one side of him was so paralyzed that his right arm clung close and useless to his side, and he had to be assisted to mount his horse, he rode almost every day on horseback, ‘sitting up as straight as a boy.’”

In the sterling qualities of intellect, Putnam stood high; but his scholastic achievements were slight, as appears in his letters. Most of these were dictated, and therefore have not the peculiar and unique interest which attaches to the literal products of his own pen. The wonder is that one who had so little schooling as he, was able to express his meaning sufficiently clearly in writing, even with the aid of an amanuensis. The fact is, however, that his letters are remarkably free from ambiguity, when all the circumstances are duly considered. But when, in any exigency, he took his pen in his own hand, the results were astonishing. The following letter, which may be found in the excellent biography by William Farland Livingston, will give an excellent idea of our hero's deficiency in “book learning.” It is addressed to General Washington:

“PICKSKILL, ye 24 Sept., 1778.

“Dear Ginrol,—Larst night I received a Leator

from Collo Spencor informing me that the Enemy had landed at the English Naborwhood and ware on thar March to hackensack. I immedat called the ginrol ofesors togather to consult what was beast to be don it was concluded to Exammin the mens gons and Cartridges & & and to have them ready for a March at the shortest notis when it should be thought beast or on receaving your Orders. I waited som time for further Intellegane but hearing non I rod down to Kings fary and on my way met 4 men with thar horses loded with bagig going back into the contry which said thay cam from within 2 milds of tarytown who said the Enemy had com out of New York in 3 larg Colloms won by the way of Maranack and won by taritown and won had gon into the jarsys Just as I had got to the fary I meat won Capt. Jonston with a leator from Collo Hay which informed me that the Enemy had got as fur as Sovalingboro church and was incamped thare and it was said thay war waiteng for a wind to bring up the ships: the Enemy are colecting all the catel sheap and hogs thay can in this setuation shuld be glad of your Excelanceeys ordors what to do

“I am Sir with the gratest Estem

“your humbel Sarveant

“ISRAEL PUTNAM.”

Of some of General Putnam's other qualities, Oliver W. B. Peabody wrote as follows:—

“His qualities as a soldier are already apparent [to the reader.] Under all circumstances, however critical, he was perfectly fearless and self-possessed, and full of the most active energy and resource at the time when they were most urgently required. No man could surpass him in the fiery charge, of which the success depends so much upon the leader; in this respect he reminds the reader of Murat, the gallant marshal of Napoleon; nor would the general feeling deny him the proud title, by which another of those marshals was distinguished, that of the bravest of the brave. At the same time, as has been already intimated, he was somewhat less successful in the more extended operations, which required the combined action of large and separate masses of men. Yet, when it is remembered that, wholly without military education and with scarcely any other, and simply by the force of his own energy and talent, he rose through all the gradations of the service to the station of first major-general in the army, till he stood second in rank to Washington alone, no better evidence could be given or required of his capacity and conduct as a soldier. Nor should it be forgotten that his humanity was always as conspicuous as his bravery, his treatment of the sick and wounded was

such as to attract the warm attachment of his own soldiers, and to extort the gratitude of the enemy. He is certainly entitled to the praise of disinterested, ardent, and successful efforts in the cause of his country; and he will be long remembered among those who served her faithfully and well, at a season when she wanted either the ability or the inclination to reward their toils and sacrifices.

“But the military reputation of General Putnam, high as it was, concealed no dark traits of personal character beneath its shadow. In all the domestic relations, the surest tests of habitual virtue, he was most exemplary; and his excellence in this respect deserves the more notice, as the stern discipline and wild adventure, in which so much of his life was spent, were more favorable to the growth of severer qualities. His disposition was frank, generous, and kind; in his intercourse with others, he was open, just, sincere, and unsuspecting; liberal in his hospitality, and of ready benevolence whenever there was any occasion for his charity. Those who knew him best were the most forward to express their admiration of his excellence. The late President Dwight, who was his friend, but very unlikely to sacrifice the claims of truth to those of personal regard, has in his writings more than once expressed the sentiment, which he has embodied in the inscription on Gen-

eral Putnam's monument ; that he was a ' man, whose generosity was singular, whose honesty was proverbial ; who raised himself to universal esteem, and offices of eminent distinction, by personal worth and a useful life.' Such is the language of others who have borne witness to his private virtues ; and what more needs to be added, than that his moral excellence flowed from a religious fountain, and that the character of a man of worth was adorned and dignified in him by the higher qualities of a Christian ? ”

Holliston, as quoted by Grosvenor, wrote as follows :

“ The character of Putnam was the result of our peculiar structure of society, and the growth of our soil. A hero from his cradle, he needed not the tactics of the schools to give him discipline, nor the maxims of philosophy to make him brave. Like the ghost of Fingal, rising in the midst of its hill, and unveiling its features to the moon, the fame of our chieftain is just beginning to unfold itself in its colossal proportions. Already the eyes of the world are turned towards him. A monument will soon stand above his grave that will be worthy of the spot. Let it be made of material solid as his integrity, and planted deep and immovable as the love that he bore to his country was seated in his heart ; yet let it be costly and rare as the lavish gifts that the creating

hand poured so plentifully upon him. Let it be simple and bold like his character, above all let it transmit the truth that has so long been told the pilgrims who visit the tomb, that 'Putnam dared to lead, where any dared to follow.' "

At Putnam's funeral services Dr. Waldo, speaking at the grave, said:

"Born a hero, whom nature taught and cherished in the lap of innumerable trials and dangers, he was terrible in battle. But from the amiableness of his heart, when carnage ceased, his humanity spread over the field like the refreshing breezes of a summer evening. The prisoner, the wounded, the sick, the forlorn, experienced the delicate sympathy of this soldiers' pillar. [Tarbox, in quoting this passage, uses the word "pillow."] The poor and needy, of every description, received the charitable bounties of this Christian soldier."

We thus see that the most noticeable trait of Putnam was his courage. This, joined with his fiery impetuosity, made him a man of mark. In the excitement of battle, he seemed to be possessed of forty devils, and his fury knew no bounds. It followed that when his own men failed him his indignation, being all directed against them, was simply terrific. It is not strange that the men feared the tongue of their leader, whom they also loved devotedly, quite as

much as they feared the bullets of the foe. Cowardice he could neither understand nor tolerate, and when he lost his self-control he poured forth a torrent of invective which no soldier would care to hear a second time.

On the other hand, as soon as the excitement of the battle was over, he was a changed man: he was as sympathetic as a brother, as gentle as a woman. After the battle, none were enemies to him, he ministered to friend and foe alike, and in doing so poured forth all the devotion of a rare soul. In time of peace, he was a general favorite in the community, by reason of his cheeriness and his never failing good nature. In his person the extremes of gentleness and of wrath met.

Impulsive as Putnam was, he had unusual persistence. He was always cheerful, and, no matter what obstacles confronted him, he never became discouraged. When opposed by overwhelming numbers of the enemy, when apparently caught in a trap, when captured and subjected to slow torture, he always maintained his cheery optimism. Though he liked nothing in the world so much as a sharp battle, he was not deficient in caution and watchfulness. When he was placed in charge of a station, all the ingenuity of the Connecticut Yankee was brought into requisition to contrive means of defence. He thus had a

balance of qualities such as is rarely found in impetuous men.

Putnam earned his first reputation in the Indian war where he served as a partisan leader, or guerilla chief. Though he did excellent service in the revolutionary war as major-general, yet his greatest abilities lay in the line of guerilla warfare. With few well trained and dauntless men under his control, striking sudden and powerful blows where least expected, he could do immense damage to a large army and that with comparative immunity to his own forces. "But," says one writer, "a large army puzzled him; it was not flexible enough in his hand, and he could not wield it with that ease and rapidity he wished." Still he was too valuable a man to be left in control of only a few score or a few hundred men; such a compact band would have been a means of increasing his personal honor, but it would have been of less value to the cause at a time when there were few men with military education from which it was possible to select generals. In spite of the lack of early military education, he made a record that compares favorably with that of any of his fellows, Washington and Lafayette alone being excepted.

The American reader cannot cease to regret that the untimely stroke of paralysis laid Putnam aside so that he was not able to bear his part in the war until

its triumphant conclusion. To his fiery nature this must have been a sore trial and a bitter disappointment. But it is pleasant to reflect that the closing years of this stormy life were spent in peace, comfort, and contentment. Men believed in him and loved him. Though his body was almost helpless, his mind remained clear and vigorous. He lived to reap the reward of being honored by all his countrymen, and most of all by his neighbors who knew him best. The esteem in which he was, and still is, held by his countrymen is indicated by the fact that nearly thirty counties, towns, and villages in widely separated parts of this country bear his name. He was one of that cluster of patriots, builders of the nation, that make glorious that period of history which witnessed the birth and early growth of the United States of America.

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